

November 30, 1988

Docket No.: 50-425

Mr. W. G. Hairston, III  
Senior Vice President -  
Nuclear Operations  
Georgia Power Company  
P. O. Box 1295  
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

Dear Mr. Hairston:

SUBJECT: VOGTLE UNIT 2 - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RE: EXEMPTION FROM  
10 CFR 50 APPENDIX J

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" for your information. This notice relates to your request contained in the Vogtle Final Safety Analysis Report for an exemption from the requirement of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(ii) of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50. In essence, the exemption would relax the requirement for air lock leakage testing before entering mode 4 each time that an air lock has been opened in mode 5 or mode 6.

This notice has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

*JSI*

Jon B. Hopkins, Project Manager  
Project Directorate II-3  
Division of Reactor Project - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:  
As stated

cc: See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONGEORGIA POWER COMPANYOGLETHORPE POWER CORPORATIONMUNICIPAL ELECTRIC AUTHORITY OF GEORGIACITY OF DALTON, GEORGIADOCKET NO. 50-425ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from the requirement of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(ii) of Appendix J to 10 CFR 50 to Georgia Power Company, Oglethorpe Power Corporation, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, and the City of Dalton, Georgia (the licensee) for Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Unit 2 located at the licensee's site in Burke County, Georgia.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action: Paragraph III.D.2(b)(ii) of Appendix J to 10 CFR 50 states "Air locks opened during periods when containment integrity is not required by the plant's Technical Specifications shall be tested at the end of such period at not less than  $P_a$ ." The exemption to this paragraph would relax the requirement for air lock leakage testing in that such a test would not be necessary before entering mode 4 each time that an air lock has been opened in mode 5 or mode 6. This exemption would apply to situations when the periodic 6-month test requirement of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(i) and the 3-day test requirement of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(iii) are current, no maintenance has been performed on the air lock, and the air lock is properly sealed.

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Whenever maintenance has been performed on an air lock, the requirements of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(ii) must still be met. The staff's technical evaluation of this request was published in Section 6.2.6 of the Vogtle Safety Evaluation Report (NUREG-1137, June 1985 and NUREG-1137 Supplement No. 5, January 1987). This exemption is responsive to the licensee's request for exemption which is set out in the Vogtle Final Safety Analysis Report.

The Need for the Proposed Action: The proposed exemption to Paragraph III.D.2(b)(ii) of Appendix J to 10 CFR 50 is needed because this requirement is not necessary in the circumstances pertaining here to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule and slows the process of returning to operation following a shutdown.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action: With regard to potential radiological impacts to the general public, the proposed exemption involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. The proposed exemption would apply to situations when the periodic 6-month test requirement of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(i) and the 3-day test requirement of Paragraph III.D.2(b)(iii) of Appendix J to 10 CFR 50 are current, no maintenance has been performed on the air lock, and the air lock is properly sealed. Appendix J to 10 CFR 50 ensures that containment leak-tight integrity can be verified periodically throughout service lifetime so as to maintain containment leakage within the limits specified in the facility Technical Specifications. Meeting the above specified criteria is sufficient to achieve this purpose because it provides adequate assurance of continued leak-tight integrity of the air lock. Therefore, the proposed exemption does not affect the potential for or

consequences of radiological accidents and does not affect radiological plant effluents. The exemption has no effect on non-radiological impacts of facility operation. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Alternative to the Proposed Action: Because we have concluded that the environmental effects of the proposed action are negligible, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated.

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested exemption. This would not reduce environmental impacts of plant operation and would result in reduced operational flexibility.

Alternative Use of Resources: This action involves no use of resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statements (construction permit and operating license) for the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's request and did not consult other agencies or persons.

#### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

Based upon the environmental assessment, we conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For details with respect to this action, see the Vogtle Final Safety Analysis Report which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N. W., Washington, D.C., and at the Burke County Public Library, 412 4th Street, Waynesboro, Georgia 30830.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this            day of

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original Signed By:

David B. Matthews, Director  
Project Directorate II-3  
Division of Reactor Projects I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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JHLew  
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Mr. W. G. Hairston, III  
Georgia Power Company

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant

cc:

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