

November 1, 2001

Mr. Jeffrey S. Forbes
Site Vice President
Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant
Nuclear Management Company, LLC
2807 West County Road 75
Monticello, MN 55362-9637

SUBJECT: MONTICELLO NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT - REQUEST TO WITHHOLD
INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (TAC NO. MB2855)

Dear Mr. Forbes:

By your application dated August 30, 2001, which included Global Nuclear Fuel-Americas, LLC's (GNF-A's), affidavit dated July 2, 2001, executed by G.A. Watford, you submitted a license amendment request for Monticello Cycle 21 Safety Limit Minimum Critical Power Ratio (SLMCPR) and requested that Exhibit D-2 ("Additional Information Regarding the Cycle Specific SLMCPR for Monticello Cycle 21") be withheld from public disclosure pursuant to 10 CFR 2.790. Your application also provided Exhibit D-3, a nonproprietary version of Exhibit D-2. By letter dated September 27, 2001, NRC requested additional information concerning why portions of the submitted information in Exhibit D-2 should be considered proprietary. By letter dated October 10, 2001, you submitted revised versions of Exhibits D-2 and D-3 with a GNF-A affidavit, dated October 4, 2001, executed by G.A. Watford, and requested that NRC return the original Exhibit D from your August 30, 2001, application. A nonproprietary version of your Exhibit D-2 (provided as Exhibit D-3) has been placed in the NRC public document room and added to the Agencywide Documents Access and Management Systems Publicly Available Records System (ADAMS PARS) Library.

The affidavit stated that the submitted information should be considered exempt from mandatory public disclosure for the following reasons:

The information identified in Exhibit D-2 is classified as proprietary because it contains details of GNF-A's fuel design and licensing methodology. The development of the methods used in these analyses, along with the testing, development, and approval of the supporting methodology was achieved at a significant cost, on the order of several million dollars, to GNF-A or its licensor.

Public disclosure of the information sought to be withheld is likely to cause substantial harm to GNF-A's competitive position and foreclose or reduce the availability of profit-making opportunities. The fuel design and licensing methodology is part of GNF-A's comprehensive boiling-water reactor safety and technology base, and its commercial value extends beyond the original development cost. The value of the technology base goes beyond the extensive physical database and analytical methodology and includes development of the expertise to determine and apply the appropriate evaluation process. In addition,

the technology base includes the value derived from providing analyses done with NRC-approved methods.

The research, development, engineering, analytical, and NRC review costs comprise a substantial investment of time and money by GNF-A or its licensor.

The precise value of the expertise to devise an evaluation process and apply the correct analytical methodology is difficult to quantify, but it clearly is substantial.

GNF-A's competitive advantage will be lost if its competitors are able to use the results of the GNF-A experience to normalize or verify their own process or if they are able to claim an equivalent understanding by demonstrating that they can arrive at the same or similar conclusions.

The value of the information to GNF-A would be lost if the information were disclosed to the public. Making such information available to competitors without their having been required to undertake a similar expenditure of resources would unfairly provide competitors with a windfall, and deprive GNF-A of the opportunity to exercise its competitive advantage to seek an adequate return on its large investment in developing these very valuable analytical tools.

We have reviewed your application and the material in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR 2.790 and, on the basis of your statements, have determined that the submitted information sought to be withheld contains proprietary commercial information and should be withheld from public disclosure.

Therefore, revised Exhibit D-2 of the submitted information, marked as proprietary, will be withheld from public disclosure pursuant to 10 CFR 2.790(b)(5) and Section 103(b) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. You requested that the original Exhibit D be returned to you. As discussed in a telephone conversation between me and Mr. D. Neve of your staff on October 30, 2001, the NRC's official records are now maintained in electronic form in ADAMS. Therefore, instead of returning the original exhibit to you, the original Exhibit D-2, marked as proprietary, will be deleted from ADAMS and paper copies will be destroyed.

Withholding from public inspection shall not affect the right, if any, of persons properly and directly concerned to inspect the documents. If the need arises, we may send copies of this information to our consultants working in this area. We will, of course, ensure that the consultants have signed the appropriate agreements for handling proprietary information.

Mr. J. Forbes

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If the basis for withholding this information from public inspection should change in the future such that the information could then be made available for public inspection, you should promptly notify the NRC. You also should understand that the NRC may have cause to review this determination in the future, for example, if the scope of a Freedom of Information Act request includes your information. In all review situations, if the NRC makes a determination adverse to the above, you will be notified in advance of any public disclosure.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, I may be reached at 301-415-2296.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Carl F. Lyon, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-263

cc: See next page

Mr. J. Forbes

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*Previously concurred

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Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant

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