

September 15, 1997

Mr. H. L. Sumner, Jr.  
Vice President - Hatch Project Support  
Southern Nuclear Operating Company  
P. O. Box 1295  
Birmingham, AL 35201

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR 73.55, "REQUIREMENTS FOR PHYSICAL PROTECTION OF LICENSED ACTIVITIES IN NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS AGAINST RADIOLOGICAL SABOTAGE" - EDWIN I. HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M99255 AND M99256)

Dear Mr. Sumner:

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to your application for exemption dated July 2, 1997. The proposed request is for exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5). Section 73.55(d)(5) states, in part, that an individual not employed by the licensee but who requires frequent and extended access to protected and vital areas, may be authorized access to these areas without escort provided the individual receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area that must be returned upon exit from the protected area. The proposed exemption would allow photo identification badges to be taken offsite by individuals not employed by the licensee, in light of the implementation of a hand geometry biometrics system for site access control at the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant.

The assessment is being forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,  
ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Ngoc B. (Tommy) Le, Project Manager  
Project Directorate II-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-321 and 50-366

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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Vice President - Hatch Project Support  
Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc.  
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ngoc B. Le".

Ngoc B. (Tommy) Le, Project Manager  
Project Directorate II-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-321 and 50-366

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

**Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant**

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**UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION****EDWIN I. HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2****DOCKET NOS. 50-321 AND 50-366****ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND****FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations with respect to Facility Operating Licenses DPR-57 and NPF-5 issued to Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc., et al. (Southern Nuclear, or the licensee) for operation of the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, located in Appling County, Georgia.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT****Identification of Proposed Action:**

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated July 2, 1997, for exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for Physical Protection of Licensed Activities in Nuclear Power Reactors Against Radiological Sabotage." The exemption would allow photo identification badges to be taken offsite by individuals not employed by the licensee who have been granted unescorted access into protected and vital areas, in light of the implementation of a hand geometry biometrics system to control site access at Hatch.

**The Need for the Proposed Action:**

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, paragraph (a), Southern Nuclear shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization. Regulation 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," paragraph (1), specifies that the "licensee shall control all points of

personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." Regulation 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) specifies that, "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." Section 73.55(d)(5) also states that an individual not employed by the licensee (i.e., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without escort provided the individual, "receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area...."

Currently, unescorted access into protected areas at the Hatch plant is controlled through the use of a photograph on a badge/keycard (hereafter referred to as a "badge"), which is stored at the access point when not in use. The security officers at each entrance station use the photograph on the badge to visually identify the individual requesting access. The badges for Southern Nuclear employees and contractor personnel who have been granted unescorted access are given to the individuals at the entrance location upon entry and are returned upon exit. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), the badges are not allowed to be taken offsite.

The licensee proposes to implement an alternate unescorted access control system that would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve badges at the entry point and would allow all individuals with unescorted access to keep their badges when departing the site. An exemption from 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) is required to permit contractors to take their badges offsite instead of returning them when exiting the site.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

Because the proposed action involves administrative matters within the protected area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological impacts. With regard to potential nonradiological impacts,

the proposed action does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternative to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to operation of the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 dated October 1972, and Unit 2 dated March 1978.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on August 22, 1997, the staff consulted with the Georgia State official, Mr. James Setser of the Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

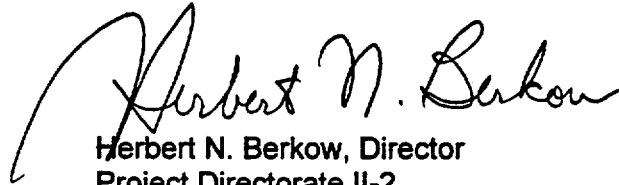
Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption. Accordingly, the Commission has concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the request for exemption dated July 2, 1997, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public

document room located at the Burke County Public Library, 412 Fourth Street, Waynesboro, Georgia.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 15th day of September 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Herbert N. Berkow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

Herbert N. Berkow, Director  
Project Directorate II-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation