

December 22, 1998

Mr. G. R. Peterson
Site Vice President
Catawba Nuclear Station
Duke Energy Corporation
4800 Concord Road
York, South Carolina 29745-9635

SUBJECT: CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT RELATED TO ISSUANCE OF EXEMPTIONS TO THE OPERATING LICENSES (TAC NOS. M99561 AND M99562)

Dear Mr. Peterson:

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to your request for exemption dated September 2, 1997. The exemption would exempt Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, from certain requirements of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 50, Appendix A, General Design Criterion 57, regarding isolation of main steam branch lines penetrating the containment. This assessment has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,
ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:
Peter S. Tam, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-413 and 50-414

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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Peter S. Tam, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-413 and 50-414

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

Catawba Nuclear Station

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Catawba Nuclear Station

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONDUKE ENERGY CORPORATIONDOCKET NOS. 50-413 AND 50-414CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of exemptions from Facility Operating Licenses Nos. NPF-35 and NPF-52, issued to Duke Energy Corporation, et al. (the licensee), for operation of the Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2 located in York County, South Carolina.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action:

The proposed action would exempt Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, from certain requirements of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 50, Appendix A, General Design Criterion (GDC) 57, regarding isolation of main steam branch lines penetrating the containment. The proposed action is in response to the licensee's application dated September 2, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The licensee requested an exemption from GDC 57 for Containment Penetrations M261 and M393 (erroneously stated as M363 in the submittal). GDC 57 imposes isolation requirements on lines that penetrate primary reactor containment and are neither part of the reactor coolant pressure boundary nor connected directly to the containment atmosphere. These are penetrations on main steam branch lines. These lines penetrate the containment

and are not part of the reactor coolant pressure boundary or connected directly to the containment atmosphere. Outside of containment, these lines branch into various separate, individual lines before reaching the respective main steam isolation valves. From each of these main steam lines, one branch supplies main steam to the turbine-driven auxiliary feedwater pump (CAPT, using the licensee's abbreviation).

Valves SA-1 and SA-4 are manual gate valves located in the Interior Doghouse immediately downstream of the respective main steam piping. These valves are locked open (with break away locks) and capable of local manual operation only. These valves are required to be open by Technical Specifications to supply steam to the CAPT, which is part of the engineered safety features. To comply literally with GDC 57, the licensee would have to add motor operators to SA-1 and SA-4 such that they become automatic or capable of remote operation.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that there is no significant environmental impact if the exemptions are granted. No changes will be made to the as-built design, and existing applicable procedures at the two units at Catawba Nuclear Station will remain the same.

The proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (i.e., the "no action" alternative). 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 did not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement related to the Catawba Nuclear Station.

Agencies and Persons Contacted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on April 1, 1998, the staff consulted with the South Carolina State official, Virgil Autrey, of the Bureau of Land and Waste Management, Department of Health and Environmental Control, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

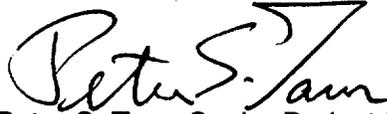
On the basis of the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed exemptions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's request for the exemptions dated September 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 York County Library, 138 East Black Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 22nd day of December 1998.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter S. Tam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

Peter S. Tam, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation