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

September 10, 1998

SUBJECT: ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS - CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. MA3280 AND MA3281)

Dear Mr. Peterson:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued the enclosed Amendment No. 172 to Facility Operating License NPF-35 and Amendment No. 163 to Facility Operating License NPF-52 for the Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, in response to your application dated August 14, 1998.

The amendments revise TS Section 4.6.5.1.b.2 regarding surveillance requirements for the ice condenser. One current requirement specifies that a visual inspection of flow passages be performed once per 9 months to ensure that there is no significant ice and frost accumulation (less than 0.38 inch). You proposed to relax the visual inspection frequency of the lower plenum support structures and turning vanes to once per 18 months, while the remaining parts of the ice condenser will continue to be inspected at 9-month intervals. The amendment for Unit 2 supersedes the Notice of Enforcement Discretion granted on August 13, 1998, and confirmed by letter dated August 14, 1998 (98-6-015).

A copy of the related Safety Evaluation is also enclosed. A Notice of Issuance will be included in the Commission's biweekly Federal Register notice.

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

Enclosures:
1. Amendment No. 172 to NPF-35
2. Amendment No. 163 to NPF-52
3. Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

September 10, 1998

Mr. G. R. Peterson
Site Vice President
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Duke Energy Corporation
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cc w/encl: See next page

Catawba Nuclear Station

cc:

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Catawba Nuclear Station

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Raleigh, North Carolina 27609-7721

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

DUKE ENERGY CORPORATION

NORTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION

SALUDA RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

DOCKET NO. 50-413

CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 172
License No. NPF-35

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:

   A. The application for amendment to the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit 1 (the facility) Facility Operating License No. NPF-35 filed by the Duke Energy Corporation, acting for itself, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation and Saluda River Electric Cooperative, Inc. (licensees), dated August 14, 1998, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations as set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, the provisions of the Act, and the rules and regulations of the Commission;

   C. There is reasonable assurance (i) that the activities authorized by this amendment can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public, and (ii) that such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   D. The issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public; and

   E. The issuance of this amendment is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51 of the Commission's regulations and all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

2. Accordingly, the license is hereby amended by page changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment, and paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. NPF-35 is hereby amended to read as follows:

   (2) Technical Specifications

   The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 172, which are attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into this license. Duke Energy Corporation shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications.

3. This license amendment is effective as of its date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

Attachment: Technical Specification
Changes

Date of Issuance: September 10, 1998

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NO. 172

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-35

DOCKET NO. 50-413

Replace the following pages of the Appendix "A" Technical Specifications with the enclosed pages. The revised pages are identified by amendment number and contain vertical lines indicating the areas of change.

Remove	Insert
3/4 6-33	3/4 6-33
3/4 6-34	3/4 6-34

3/4.6.5 ICE CONDENSER

ICE BED

LIMITING CONDITION FOR OPERATION

3.6.5.1 The ice bed shall be OPERABLE with:

a. The stored ice having a boron concentration of at least 1800 ppm boron as sodium tetraborate and a pH of 9.0 to 9.5,

b. Flow channels through the ice condenser,

c. A maximum ice bed temperature of less than or equal to 27°F,

d. A total ice weight of at least 2,330,856 pounds at a 95% level of confidence, and

e. 1944 ice baskets.

APPLICABILITY: MODES 1, 2, 3, and 4.

ACTION:

With the ice bed inoperable, restore the ice bed to OPERABLE status within 48 hours or be in at least HOT STANDBY within the next 6 hours and in COLD SHUTDOWN within the following 30 hours.

SURVEILLANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.6.5.1 The ice condenser shall be determined OPERABLE:

a. At least once per 12 hours by using the Ice Bed Temperature Monitoring System to verify that the maximum ice bed temperature is less than or equal to 27°F,

b. At least once per 9 months by:

1) Chemical analyses which verify that at least nine representative samples of stored ice have a boron concentration of at least 1800 ppm as sodium tetraborate and a pH of 9.0 to 9.5 at 25°C; and

2) Verifying, by a visual inspection of at least two flow passages per ice condenser bay, that the accumulation of frost or ice on flow passages between ice baskets, past lattice frames, and through the top deck floor grating is restricted to a thickness

of less than or equal to 0.38 inch. If one flow passage per bay is found to have an accumulation of frost or ice with a thickness of greater than or equal to 0.38 inch, a representative sample of 20 additional flow passages from the same bay shall be visually inspected. If these additional flow passages are found acceptable, the surveillance program may proceed considering the single deficiency as unique and acceptable. More than one restricted flow passage per bay is evidence of abnormal degradation of the ice condenser.

c. At least once per 18 months by:

1) Verifying, for the lower inlet plenum support structures and turning vanes only, by a visual inspection, accumulation of ice or frost on structural members comprising flow channels through the ice condenser is less than or equal to 0.38 inch thick.

2) Weighing a representative sample of at least 144 ice baskets and verifying that each basket contains at least 1199 lbs of ice. The representative sample shall include six baskets from each of the 24 ice condenser bays and shall be constituted of one basket each from Radial Rows 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (or from the same row of an adjacent bay if a basket from a designated row cannot be obtained for weighing) within each bay. If any basket is found to contain less than 1199 pounds of ice, a representative sample of 20 additional baskets from the same bay shall be weighed. The minimum average weight of ice from the 20 additional baskets and the discrepant basket shall not be less than 1199 pounds/basket at a 95% level of confidence.

The ice condenser shall also be subdivided into 3 groups of baskets, as follows: Group 1 - Bays 1 through 8, Group 2 - Bays 9 through 16, and Group 3 - Bays 17 through 24. The minimum average ice weight of the sample baskets from Radial Rows 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 in each group shall not be less than 1199 pounds/basket at a 95% level of confidence.

The minimum total ice condenser ice weight at a 95% level of confidence shall be calculated using all ice basket weights determined during this weighing program and shall not be less than 2,330,856 pounds.

d. At least once per 40 months by lifting and visually inspecting the accessible portions of at least two ice baskets from each one-third of the ice condenser and verifying that the ice baskets are free of detrimental structural wear, cracks, corrosion or other damage. The ice baskets shall be raised at least 12 feet for this inspection.

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

DUKE ENERGY CORPORATION

NORTH CAROLINA MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY NO. 1

PIEDMONT MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY

DOCKET NO. 50-414

CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 2

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 163
License No. NPF-52

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:

   A. The application for amendment to the Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit 2 (the facility) Facility Operating License No. NPF-52 filed by the Duke Energy Corporation, acting for itself, North Carolina Municipal Power Agency No. 1 and Piedmont Municipal Power Agency (licensees), dated August 14, 1998, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations as set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, the provisions of the Act, and the rules and regulations of the Commission;

   C. There is reasonable assurance (i) that the activities authorized by this amendment can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public, and (ii) that such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   D. The issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public; and

   E. The issuance of this amendment is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51 of the Commission's regulations and all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

2. Accordingly, the license is hereby amended by page changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment, and paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. NPF-52 is hereby amended to read as follows:

   (2) Technical Specifications

   The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 163, which are attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into this license. Duke Energy Corporation shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications.

3. This license amendment is effective as of its date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

Attachment: Technical Specification Changes

Date of Issuance: September 10, 1998

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NO. 163

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-52

DOCKET NO. 50-414

Replace the following pages of the Appendix "A" Technical Specifications with the enclosed page. The revised pages are identified by amendment number and contain vertical lines indicating the areas of change.

Remove	Insert
3/4 6-33	3/4 6-33
3/4 6-34	3/4 6-34

3/4.6.5 ICE CONDENSER

ICE BED

LIMITING CONDITION FOR OPERATION

3.6.5.1 The ice bed shall be OPERABLE with:

a. The stored ice having a boron concentration of at least 1800 ppm boron as sodium tetraborate and a pH of 9.0 to 9.5,

b. Flow channels through the ice condenser,

c. A maximum ice bed temperature of less than or equal to 27°F,

d. A total ice weight of at least 2,330,856 pounds at a 95% level of confidence, and

e. 1944 ice baskets.

APPLICABILITY: MODES 1, 2, 3, and 4.

ACTION:

With the ice bed inoperable, restore the ice bed to OPERABLE status within 48 hours or be in at least HOT STANDBY within the next 6 hours and in COLD SHUTDOWN within the following 30 hours.

SURVEILLANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.6.5.1 The ice condenser shall be determined OPERABLE:

a. At least once per 12 hours by using the Ice Bed Temperature Monitoring System to verify that the maximum ice bed temperature is less than or equal to 27°F,

b. At least once per 9 months by:

1) Chemical analyses which verify that at least nine representative samples of stored ice have a boron concentration of at least 1800 ppm as sodium tetraborate and a pH of 9.0 to 9.5 at 25°C; and

2) Verifying, by a visual inspection of at least two flow passages per ice condenser bay, that the accumulation of frost or ice on flow passages between ice baskets, past lattice frames, and through the top deck floor grating is restricted to a thickness

of less than or equal to 0.38 inch. If one flow passage per bay is found to have an accumulation of frost or ice with a thickness of greater than or equal to 0.38 inch, a representative sample of 20 additional flow passages from the same bay shall be visually inspected. If these additional flow passages are found acceptable, the surveillance program may proceed considering the single deficiency as unique and acceptable. More than one restricted flow passage per bay is evidence of abnormal degradation of the ice condenser.

c. At least once per 18 months by:

1) Verifying, for the lower inlet plenum support structures and turning vanes only, by a visual inspection, accumulation of ice or frost on structural members comprising flow channels through the ice condenser is less than or equal to 0.38 inch thick.

2) Weighing a representative sample of at least 144 ice baskets and verifying that each basket contains at least 1199 lbs of ice. The representative sample shall include six baskets from each of the 24 ice condenser bays and shall be constituted of one basket each from Radial Rows 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (or from the same row of an adjacent bay if a basket from a designated row cannot be obtained for weighing) within each bay. If any basket is found to contain less than 1199 pounds of ice, a representative sample of 20 additional baskets from the same bay shall be weighed. The minimum average weight of ice from the 20 additional baskets and the discrepant basket shall not be less than 1199 pounds/basket at a 95% level of confidence.

The ice condenser shall also be subdivided into 3 groups of baskets, as follows: Group 1 - Bays 1 through 8, Group 2 - Bays 9 through 16, and Group 3 - Bays 17 through 24. The minimum average ice weight of the sample baskets from Radial Rows 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 in each group shall not be less than 1199 pounds/basket at a 95% level of confidence.

The minimum total ice condenser ice weight at a 95% level of confidence shall be calculated using all ice basket weights determined during this weighing program and shall not be less than 2,330,856 pounds.

d. At least once per 40 months by lifting and visually inspecting the accessible portions of at least two ice baskets from each one-third of the ice condenser and verifying that the ice baskets are free of detrimental structural wear, cracks, corrosion or other damage. The ice baskets shall be raised at least 12 feet for this inspection.

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

RELATED TO AMENDMENT NO. 172 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NPF-35

AND AMENDMENT NO. 163 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NPF-52

DUKE ENERGY CORPORATION, ET AL.

CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2

DOCKET NOS. 50-413 AND 50-414

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On August 12, 1998, Duke Energy Corporation (the licensee) determined that Technical Specification Surveillance Requirement (SR) 4.6.5.1.b.2 was not being met at Catawba Nuclear Station, Unit 2, because the licensee could not inspect the lower inlet plenum support structures and turning vanes while the units are at power without incurring significant dose to personnel performing the inspection.

By letter dated August 12, 1998, the licensee requested that the NRC exercise discretion not to enforce compliance with the actions required by SR 4.6.5.1.b.2 related to the verification of ice condenser system components with respect to the accumulation of frost or ice. The August 12, 1998, letter documented information previously discussed with the staff in a telephone conversation on August 12, 1998. As result of its review, the staff verbally granted enforcement discretion to Catawba Unit 2 on August 13, 1998, and documented the verbal authorization by a Notice of Enforcement Discretion (NOED) letter dated August 14, 1998 (98-6-015). The NOED will expire upon Unit 2 entering Mode 5 for the end-of-Cycle-9 refueling outage.

By letter dated August 14, 1998, the licensee submitted a request for changes to the Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, Technical Specifications (TSs). The requested changes would revise TS SR 4.6.5.1.b.2 regarding surveillance requirements for the ice condenser. The current requirement specifies that a visual inspection of flow passages be performed once per 9 months to ensure that there is no significant ice and frost accumulation (less than 0.38 inch). The licensee proposed to relax the visual inspection frequency of the lower plenum support structures and turning vanes to once per 18 months, while the remaining parts of the ice condenser will continue to be inspected at 9-month intervals.

2.0 EVALUATION

Currently SR 4.6.5.1.b.2 requires that, at least once per 9 months:

> Verifying, by a visual inspection of at least two flow passages per ice condenser bay, that the accumulation of frost or ice on flow passages between ice baskets, past lattice frames, through the top deck floor grating, or past the lower inlet

> plenum support structures and turning vanes is restricted to a thickness of less than or equal to 0.38 inch. If one flow passage per bay is found to have an accumulation of frost or ice with a thickness of greater than or equal to 0.38 inch, a representative sample of 20 additional flow passages from the same bay shall be visually inspected. If these additional flow passages are found acceptable, the surveillance program may proceed considering the single deficiency as unique and acceptable. More than one restricted flow passage per bay is evidence of abnormal degradation of the ice condenser.

The proposed SR would delete a reference to lower the inlet plenum support structures and turning vanes in SR 4.6.5.1.b.2 and add SR 4.6.5.1.c.1, that requires:

> Verifying, for the lower inlet plenum support structures and turning vanes only, by a visual inspection, accumulation of ice or frost on structural members comprising flow channels through the ice condenser is less than or equal to 0.38 inch thick.

The staff has reviewed the technical aspects of the licensee's request and believes that the requested TS changes are appropriate with respect to the proposed changes. Staff concern with frost and ice buildup considerations originally involved the relatively restricted flow passages associated with the ice basket matrix, and not the lower inlet plenum. The principal reason for requiring that the frost and ice buildup be limited to 0.38 inch stemmed from the steam flow considerations within the ice basket matrix. Uncontrolled buildup of frost and ice in this region can have a significant effect on the pressure drop across the ice condenser. The current and proposed SR intend to assure that adequate flow area is available for steam flow, so that the pressure drop across the ice matrix is acceptable.

The important factor to note is that the lower inlet plenum and associated components (such as the turning vanes) represent a relatively large free volume, such that the available flow area is not significantly affected by any localized frost/ice buildup within this volume. Specifically, the available flow area in the lower inlet plenum is typically 10 to 100 times the flow area within the ice basket matrix. Hence, the literal application of the current SR to the lower inlet plenum region has no significant physical basis. Based on the above discussion, the staff finds the licensee's proposed changes to the TS acceptable.

3.0 STATEMENT OF EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES

The Commission's regulation, as stated in 10 CFR 50.91, provides special exceptions for the issuance of amendments when the usual 30-day notice cannot be met. One type of special exception is an exigency. An exigency exists when the staff and the licensee need to act quickly and time does not permit the staff to publish a Federal Register notice allowing 30 days for prior comment, and the staff also determines that the amendments involve no significant hazard consideration.

In accordance with 10 CFR 50.91(a)(6)(i)(A), the staff issued a Federal Register notice on August 27, 1998 (63 FR 45872) providing notice of an opportunity for hearing and proposing that the requested amendments involve no significant hazard consideration. The public was allowed 14 days after the date of publication of that notice to provide comments. No comments were received.

On August 12, 1998, as result of discussions with the staff, the licensee concluded that compliance with SR 4.6.5.1.b.2 was not being met because the licensee could not inspect the lower inlet plenum support structures and turning vanes while the units are at power without incurring significant dose to personnel performing the inspection. On August 14, 1998, the licensee submitted its amendment request. In its application, the licensee explainted why the exigent situation occurred.

On the basis of the above discussion, the staff has determined that exigent circumstances exist, that the licensee used its best efforts to make a timely application, and did not cause the exigent situation.

4.0 FINAL NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION

The Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92 state that the Commission may make a final determination that a license amendment involves no significant hazards considerations, if operation of the facility, in accordance with the amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

In its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, as required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided the following:

First Standard

Implementation of this amendment would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated. Approval of this amendment will have no significant effect on accident probabilities or consequences. The ice condenser is not an accident initiating system; therefore, there will be no impact on any accident probabilities by the approval of this amendment. Each unit's ice condenser is currently fully capable of meeting its design basis accident mitigating function. Therefore, there will be no impact on any accident consequences.

Second Standard

Implementation of this amendment would not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated. No new accident causal mechanisms are created as a result of NRC approval of this amendment request. No changes are being made to the plant which will introduce any new accident causal

mechanisms. This amendment request does not impact any plant systems that are accident initiators, since the ice condenser is an accident mitigating system.

Third Standard

Implementation of this amendment would not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. Margin of safety is related to the confidence in the ability of the fission product barriers to perform their design functions during and following an accident situation. These barriers include the fuel cladding, the reactor coolant system, and the containment system. The performance of these fission product barriers will not be impacted by implementation of this proposed amendment. The ice condenser for each unit is already capable of performing as designed. Operating experience has shown that the performance of the ice condenser would not be adversely impacted by extending the frequency of these SRs [surveillance requirements] to an 18-month interval. No safety margins will be impacted.

The NRC staff has evaluated the amendments and the licensee's analysis against the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c). The NRC staff concludes that the amendments meet the three criteria of 10 CFR 50.92(c). Therefore, the staff has made a final determination that the proposed amendments do not involve a significant hazards consideration.

5.0 STATE CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the South Carolina State official, Mr. Virgil Autry, was notified of the proposed issuance of the amendments. The State official had no comments.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The amendments change surveillance requirements. The NRC staff has determined that the amendments involve no significant increase in the amounts, and no significant change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite, and that there is no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. The Commission has made a final finding that the amendments involve no significant hazards consideration. Accordingly, the amendments meet the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of the amendments.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Commission has concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and (3) the issuance of the amendments will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Principal Contributors: Kazimieras Campe
Peter S. Tam

Date: September 10, 1998