

May 12, 1989

Docket Nos.: 50-348
50-364

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Mr. W. G. Hairston, III
Senior Vice President -
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Dear Mr. Hairston:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF ISSUANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (TACS 62187/62188)

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a "Notice of Issuance of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to your request for amendments to Facility Operating Licenses NPF-2 and NPF-8 for the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, respectively. The proposed amendments would extend the expiration dates of the licenses. Also enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment.

The Notice has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Brenda Mozafari/for

Edward A. Reeves, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate II-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:

1. FR Notice
2. Environmental Assessment

cc: w/enclosure:
See next page

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Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ALABAMA POWER COMPANY
DOCKET NOS. 50-348 AND 50-364
NOTICE OF ISSUANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-2 and NPF-8, issued to Alabama Power Company, (the licensee) for operation of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, (Farley Units 1 and 2 or Farley Plant) located in Houston County, Alabama.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action:

The amendments would consist of changes to the operating licenses to extend the expiration dates of the operating licenses from August 16, 2012 to June 25, 2017 for Farley Unit 1, and to March 31, 2021 for Farley Unit 2. The proposed license amendments are responsive to the licensee's application dated August 11, 1986, supplemented July 22, 1987. The Commission's staff has prepared an Environmental Assessment of the proposed action, "Environmental Assessment by the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation Relating to the Change in Expiration Dates of Facility Operating Licenses NPF-2 and NPF-8, Alabama Power Company, Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, Docket Numbers 50-348 and 50-364," dated May 12, 1989 .

Summary of Environmental Assessment:

The Commission's staff has reviewed the potential environmental impact of the proposed changes in expiration dates of the operating licenses for the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2. This evaluation considered the previous environmental studies, including the "Final Environmental Statement Related to Construction of Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and Unit 2," June, 1972; the "Final Environmental Statement Related to Operation of Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2," December 1974; NUREG-0727, Addendum, September 1980, and more recent NRC policy.

Radiological Impacts:

The staff concludes that the Exclusion Area (owned and controlled by the licensee), the Low Population Zone (area within 2 miles of site), and the nearest population center distances will probably be unchanged from those described in the June 1972 and December 1974 Final Environmental Statements (FES). Based on the 1980 census, the population density within 10 miles of the plant remains essentially the same low density as was estimated to live within the 10-mile zone based upon the 1970 census. As shown in Table 5.4 of the 1974 FES, the total number of residents within the 10-mile zone should remain about 11,000. With the slow, small increases in the number of people living within the 10-mile zone and with the continuing rural nature of the area, the current and future estimated population around the plant should pose no problem to the proposed extension of the operating licenses.

The additional period of plant operation would not significantly affect the probability or consequences of any reactor accident. Station radiological effluents to unrestricted areas during normal operation have been well within Commission regulations regarding as-low-as-is-reasonably-achievable (ALARA) limits, and are indicative of future releases. The proposed additional years of reactor operation do not increase the annual public risk from reactor operation.

With regard to normal plant operation, the occupational exposures for Farley Units 1 and 2 have been less than the industry average for pressurized water reactors. The licensee is striving for further dose reductions in accordance with ALARA principles. We expect further dose reductions to be achieved by the use of advanced technologies and equipment that will likely become available.

Accordingly, annual radiological impacts on man, both offsite and onsite, are not more severe than previously estimated in the FES. Our previous cost-benefit conclusions remain valid.

The environmental impacts attributable to transportation of spent fuel and radioactive waste from the Farley Plant, with respect to normal conditions of transport and possible accidents in transport, would be bounded as set forth in Summary Table S-4 of 10 CFR 51.52. The values in Table S-4 would continue to represent the contribution of transportation to the environmental costs associated with plant operation.

Non-Radiological Impacts:

The Commission has concluded that the proposed extensions will not cause a significant increase in the impacts to the environment and will not change any conclusions reached by the Commission in the FES.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has reviewed the proposed changes to the expiration dates of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, facility operating licenses relative to the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51. Based upon the environmental assessment, the staff concludes that there are no significant radiological or non-radiological impacts associated with the proposed action and that the proposed license amendments will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the Commission has determined, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.31, not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed amendments.

For further details with respect to this action, see (1) the application for amendments dated August 11, 1986, as supplemented on July 22, 1987; (2) the Final Environmental Statement for the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and Unit 2, issued June 1972; (3) the Final Environmental Statement Related to Operation of Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant; Unit 2, issued December 1974; (4) NUREG-0727 Addendum, issued September 1980, and (5) the Environmental Assessment dated May 12, 1989 . These documents are available for public inspection


at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.,
and at the Houston-Love Memorial Library, 212 W. Burdeshaw Street, P. O. Box
1369, Dothen, Alabama 36302.

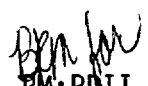
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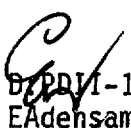
FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original Signed By:

Elinor G. Adensam, Director
Project Directorate II-1
Division of Reactor Projects I/II


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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
RELATING TO THE CHANGE IN EXPIRATION DATES OF
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSES NPF-2 AND NPF-8
ALABAMA POWER COMPANY
JOSEPH M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2
DOCKET NOS. 50-348 AND 50-364
DATED: May 12, 1989

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the staff) is considering the issuance of proposed amendments which would extend the expiration dates of the facility operating licenses for the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 (Farley Units 1 and 2 or Farley). The expiration date for license NPF-2 for Farley Unit 1 would be extended from August 16, 2012 to June 25, 2017; while the expiration date for license NPF-8 for Farley Unit 2 would be extended from August 16, 2012 to March 31, 2021. Farley Units 1 and 2 are operated by Alabama Power Company (APCo), the licensee, and are located in Houston County, Alabama.

2.0 IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The currently licensed terms for Farley Units 1 and 2 are 40 years commencing with the issuance of the construction permits. Accounting for the time that was required for construction of the units, the effective operating license terms are approximately 35 years for Unit 1 and 31 years for Unit 2. The licensee's application of August 11, 1986, as supplemented July 22, 1987, requests extensions of the expiration dates of the operating licenses to June 25, 2017 for Unit 1, and to March 31, 2021 for Unit 2. With these proposed expiration dates, the 40-year operating terms for the licenses would start with issuance of the operating license rather than the construction permit.

3.0 THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The granting of the proposed license amendments would allow the licensee to operate Farley Units 1 and 2 for approximately five and nine additional years, respectively, beyond the currently approved license expiration dates. Without issuance of the proposed license amendments, Farley Units 1 and 2 must be shut down at the end of the currently approved license terms.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

In June 1972, the United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), issued the "Final Environmental Statement related to construction of Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and Unit 2." This document was issued in support of issuance of construction permits for Units 1 and 2. Subsequently, in December 1974, the AEC issued the "Final Environmental Statement related to operation of Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2." Later, when Unit 2 was licensed, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued Addendum (NUREG-0727), dated September 1980, to the FES. This Addendum to the FES is significant in that some environmental impacts of operation of both Units 1 and 2 were considered together within the time-frame of licensing of Unit 2. The staff has reviewed the Farley FES, and additional information provided by the licensee, to determine the environmental impact of operation of the Farley Plant for approximately five (Unit 1) and approximately nine (Unit 2) additional years.

4.1 Radiological Impacts - General Public

We have considered potential radiological impacts for the general public in residence in the vicinity of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Power Plant; these impacts include potential accidents and normal radiological releases.

In addition, we considered the impacts of radiation exposure to workers at the Farley Nuclear Plant. Finally, the impact on the uranium fuel cycle and the transportation of fuel and radwaste has been considered. These impacts are summarized in the following Sections 4.1.1 through 4.1.4.

4.1.1 Environmental Impacts - General Public

In the Farley FES, dated December 1974, the staff calculated the dose commitment to the population residing around the Farley site to assess the impacts on people from radioactive material released as part of the normal operation of the plant. Table 5.4 of that FES lists the estimated cumulative doses associated with the operation of Farley Units 1 and 2. The combined doses from both units are well below the annual dose design objectives of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix I. Thus, the staff concludes that the doses should remain within the realm projected in the FES. Therefore, the environmental impact on the general public should not be significantly different during the requested five and nine additional years.

We have assessed the public risks from reactor accidents per year of operation at other reactors of comparable design and power level. In all cases, the estimated risks of early fatalities and latent cancer fatalities per year of reactor operation have been small compared to the risks of many non-reactor types of accidents to which the public is typically exposed, and the natural incidence of fatal cancers. The annual risks associated with reactor accidents did not increase with longer periods of operation of the reactor. If similar risks were estimated for Farley, we would expect a similar conclusion. Further, as shown in Table 7.2 of the 1974 FES, the integrated exposure to the population within a 50-mile radius of the site from each postulated accident would be orders of magnitude smaller than that from naturally occurring background radiation. When considered with the probability of occurrence, the annual potential radiation exposure of the population from all the postulated accidents is an even smaller fraction of the exposure than from natural background radiation. In fact, it is well within naturally occurring variations in the natural background.

Also, we note that the 1974 FES considered a 40-year plant lifetime to evaluate public risks. Therefore, we conclude that the proposed additional years of operation would not increase the annual public risk from the postulated reactor accidents.

Table 2.1 of the 1974 FES reflects the population distribution within 50 miles of the site to be 330,776 in 1975 with a projected population increase to 494,349 by the year 2015 based on 1970 census data. Likewise, Table 2.1 of the 1974 FES reflects the population within 10 miles of the plant to be 10,777 in 1975 and projected to 16,944 in 2015. Since the license extensions would be to 2017 for Unit 1 and 2021 for Unit 2, the 1974 FES data should remain valid. However, we requested that the licensee provide similar information based on the more recent 1980 census. The

licensee's letter dated July 22, 1987 provided the data. Our review of that data indicates that significant changes are unlikely to occur in either the population growth rate or the pattern of growth during the extended operating period.

4.1.2 Environmental Impacts - Uranium Fuel Cycle

In addition to the impacts associated with the operation of the reactors, there are impacts associated with the uranium fuel cycle. The uranium fuel cycle includes those facilities and processes (e.g., uranium mills, fuel fabrication plants, etc.) that are necessary to support the operation of the reactors. The 1974 FES and the Addendum of September 1980 described the impacts associated with the uranium fuel cycle. These impacts were based on 30 years of operation of a model 1000 MWe light water reactor. The fuel requirements for the model reactor were assumed to be one initial core load and 29 annual refuelings (approximately one-third of the core is replaced during each refueling).

In considering the annual fuel requirements for 40 years for a model reactor, fuel use is averaged over a 40 year operating life (one initial core and 39 refuelings of approximately one-third core each). This averaging results in a slight reduction in annual fuel use for 40 years of operation, as compared to the annual fuel requirement averaged over a 30-year operating life. The net result is an approximately 1.5 percent reduction in the annual fuel requirements for the model reactor due to averaging the initial core load over 40 years, instead of 30 years. This small reduction in fuel requirements would not lead to significant changes in the annual impacts associated with the uranium fuel cycle. The staff concludes that the FES would not be changed with regard to the uranium fuel cycle impact in order to consider 40 years of operation. If anything, the values in the FES become more conservative when a 40-year period of operation is considered, especially in light of refueling cycle intervals which have been extended from 12 months to 18 months. Additional margin in the values contained in 10 CFR 51.51 Table S-3 and 10 CFR 51.52 Table S-4 lies in the fact that these tables were developed based on the anticipated fuel requirements of a 1000 MWe reactor. Each of the Farley reactors are rated at 829 MWe, and thus, have lower fuel requirements. Therefore, we conclude that the proposed increase in duration of operation should not alter the conclusions of 10 CFR 51.51 Table S-3, 10 CFR 51.52 Table S-4, the 1974 FES, and Addendum of 1980, and is, thus, acceptable.

4.1.3 Environmental Impacts - Occupational Exposures

We have evaluated the licensee's consideration of any possible increase in dose assessment for the additional years during which Farley Units 1 and 2 would operate. We compared recent Farley dose data with overall industry dose experience. The average dose for the Farley plant during the five-year period of 1983 through 1987 was 409 person-rem per year per unit. This is comparable to the industry average of 371 person-rem per unit per year for operating pressurized water reactors in the United States. Also, this review period included the year of 1983, when Farley Unit 1 experienced

unusually high dose exposures related to fuel leakage due to a core baffle jet problem. The licensee has corrected that problem. We do not expect any significant increases in station doses during the additional years of operation. Advanced, state-of-the-art technologies will be employed, including use of robotics, enhanced chemistry control and modern decontamination techniques. Also, we would expect that any dose increases resulting from maintenance and corrosion product buildup would be offset by a continually improving ALARA program, dose-saving plant modifications, and fewer major modifications.

Another indicator of occupational exposures is personnel contamination. Such personnel contamination events at the Farley plant averaged 63 per year per unit compared to the 1988 industry average of 201 per year per unit. Continuing improvements noted in fuel integrity and increased efforts to prevent leaks from contaminated systems helped to keep the Farley average below that of the industry. Overall, occupational radiation exposures can be expected to remain about as estimated in the FES and as experienced during recent years.

Additional occupational exposures will result from decommissioning of the Farley units, although these doses will be incurred with or without the license extension periods. Any increases in corrosion product buildup during the period of extension will be compensated for by improved chemistry controls and other ALARA measures. Consequently, the extended operating times should have no measurable adverse effect on decommissioning doses.

Occupational exposures can also result from spent fuel storage at the Farley site. Currently, the approved storage capacity of the two separate spent fuel storage pools at the Farley plant is 2814 assemblies. Projections are that this capacity will accommodate spent fuel discharge to the pools until the year 2006 for Unit 1 and 2008 for Unit 2. The licensee has a contract with the Department of Energy for removal from the plant site and disposal of spent fuel, commencing in 1998. In the event this fuel removal is delayed and additional storage is required, such storage could be accommodated using onsite storage in dry storage casks. Also, the licensee states that other NRC approved storage casks would very likely be available in the late 1990s. Therefore, additional spent fuel storage may have a minimal effect on the projected occupational doses.

On this basis, we conclude that the licensee's considerations of any possible increases in dose assessment are acceptable and that the radiation protection program is adequate to ensure that occupational radiation exposures will be maintained as low as reasonably achievable and in continued compliance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 20. We also conclude that the environmental impact on occupational exposures for the proposed 40-year operating license durations are not significantly different from those for the license durations which we had previously evaluated and authorized.

4.1.4 Environmental Impacts-Transportation of Fuel and Waste

We have reviewed the environmental impacts attributable to the transportation of fuel and waste to and from the Farley site. With respect to the normal conditions of transport and possible accidents in transport, we conclude that the environmental impacts are bounded by those identified in Table S-4, "Environmental Impact of Transportation of Fuel and Waste To and From One Light Water-Cooled Nuclear Power Reactor" of 10 CFR Part 51.52. The bases for this conclusion are that: 1) Table S-4 is based on an annual refueling and an assumption of 60 spent-fuel shipments per reactor year. At the present time, the licensee has completed a transition from the original 12-month refueling cycle to an 18-month refueling cycle which results in fewer than 60 spent-fuel shipments per year. This reduction in the number of fuel shipments will reduce the overall impacts related to population exposure and accidents discussed in Table S-4; and 2) Table S-4 represents the contribution of such transportation to annual radiation dose per reactor year to exposed transportation workers and to the general public. The licensee states that anticipated fuel burnup will be less than 60 gigawatt days per metric ton uranium (GWD/MTU). We have previously found (53 FR 6040, February 29, 1988) that the environmental impacts summarized in Table S-4 of 10 CFR 51.52 are conservative and bound the corresponding impacts for burnup levels up to 60 GWD/MTU. The radiation levels of transport fuel casks are limited by the Department of Transportation and are not dependent on fuel enrichment and/or irradiation levels. Therefore, the estimated doses to exposed individuals per reactor year would not increase or exceed those specified in Table S-4 and are acceptable.

Based on the above, the annual radiation dose to individuals would not be significantly changed by the extended period of operation. Although some incremental risk with respect to normal conditions of transportation and possible accidents in transport would be attributed to the additional years of operation, the incremental risk would not be significant because the annual risk for such transportation is small.

The licensee provided actual experience data for radwaste generation and shipments from Farley in response to our questions. The data was compared to data projected in FES Table 11.4, as well as to NUREG-0116, Table 3.1. For the years 1982 through 1986, data was also compared to industry average data. Analysis of the data shows Farley to be well below the industry averages for most of the years, higher than the FES projections, and far below the predictions in NUREG-0116. While the volume generated for each year from 1982 through 1986 is more than double the FES projections, the recently completed radwaste solidification/dewatering facility and the downward trends shown for 1984 through 1986 indicate improved licensee attention to decreasing the generation and shipment of radwaste. We would expect that this decreasing trend would continue to reduce the generation and shipment of radwaste throughout the remaining life extension now being considered for the Farley plant. However, the volume will probably remain above projections but still far below the NUREG-0116 values.

Therefore, we conclude that the environmental impacts associated with fuel transport and radwaste generation and shipments for a 40-year license are not significantly different from those of the current operating license periods.

4.2 Non-Radiological Impacts

We have reevaluated the non-radiological impacts associated with operation of Farley Units 1 and 2 to include the approximately five and nine additional years, respectively, of operation associated with changes in the expiration dates of the operating licenses. The non-radiological impacts, primarily on water and land use, are shown in the FES to be quite minor. The FES further states that Farley Units 1 and 2 were designed to operate for 40 years and that this was considered in assessing non-radiological impacts. All non-radiological monitoring and studies conducted as requirements of the FES, Environmental Protection Plan, and State of Alabama National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit have demonstrated the non-radiological effects to have only minor impact on the environment. Continued plant operation during the additional operating periods would also have a minor impact, especially when compared to the impacts associated with construction of replacement power production capability. Based on these studies which focused on factors other than the term of operation, we conclude that the non-radiological impacts associated with the proposed changes in the operating license expiration dates are acceptable.

5.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

The principal alternative to issuance of the proposed license extensions would be to deny the application. In this case, Farley Units 1 and 2 would shut down upon expiration of the present operating licenses.

In Section 10 of the 1974 FES, a cost-benefit analysis is presented for Farley Units 1 and 2. Included in the analysis is a comparison of the various options for producing an equivalent electrical power capacity. Even considering significant changes in the economics of the alternatives, operation of Farley Units 1 and 2 in the present plant configuration for an additional five and nine years would only require incremental yearly costs. These costs would be substantially less than the purchase of replacement power or the installation of new electrical generating capacity. Moreover, the overall cost per year of the facility would decrease since the large initial capital outlay would be averaged over a greater number of years. In summary, the cost-benefit advantage of the Farley plant compared to alternative electrical power generating capacity improves with the extended plant lifetime.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE USE OF RESOURCES

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in connection with the 1974 FES.

7.0 AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED

We reviewed the licensee's amendment requests and consulted with the State of Alabama, Department of Public Health, which had no objection to the proposed operating license extensions.

8.0 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed amendments. We also reviewed the proposed license amendments relative to the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51. Based on this assessment, we conclude that there are no significant radiological or non-radiological impacts associated with the proposed action and the issuance of the proposed license amendments will not change any conclusions reached by the Commission in the FES and Addendum. Therefore, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.31, an environmental impact statement need not be prepared for this action. Based upon this environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.