

May 30, 1995

Mr. D. N. Morey
Vice President
Southern Nuclear Operating Company
Post Office Box 1295
Birmingham, AL 35201-1295

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" - JOSEPH M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M92037 AND M92038)

Dear Mr. Morey:

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to your application for exemption dated April 3, 1995. The proposed request is for exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5). Section 73.55(d)(5) states 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 implementation of a hand geometry biometrics system for site access control at the Farley Nuclear Plant such that photo identification badges may be taken offsite by individuals not employed by Southern Nuclear.

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

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

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

Docket Nos. 50-348 and 50-364

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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Southern Nuclear Operating Company
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herbert N. Berkow".

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

Docket Nos. 50-348 and 50-364

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. D. N. Morey
Southern Nuclear Operating
Company, Inc.

Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant

cc:

Mr. R. D. Hill, Jr.
General Manager -
Southern Nuclear Operating Company
Post Office Box 470
Ashford, Alabama 36312

Heinz Mueller
Environmental Review Coordinator
345 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30365

Mr. B. L. Moore, Licensing Manager
Southern Nuclear Operating Company
Post Office Box 1295
Birmingham, Alabama 35201-1295

Mr. M. Stanford Blanton
Balch and Bingham Law Firm
Post Office Box 306
1710 Sixth Avenue North
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

Mr. J. D. Woodard
Executive Vice President
Southern Nuclear Operating Company
P.O. Box 1295
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

State Health Officer
Alabama Department of Public Health
434 Monroe Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1701

Chairman
Houston County Commission
Post Office Box 6406
Dothan, Alabama 36302

Regional Administrator, Region II
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
101 Marietta St., N.W., Ste. 2900
Atlanta, Georgia 30323

Resident Inspector
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
7388 N. State Highway 95
Columbia, Alabama 36319

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
JOSEPH M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2
DOCKET NOS. 50-348 AND 50-364
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 to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-2 and NPF-8. These licenses are issued to the Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) and the Alabama Power Company for operation of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 (Farley), located in Houston County, Alabama.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action:

The proposed action is in accordance with the SNC's application dated April 3, 1995, 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 implementation of a hand geometry biometrics system to control site access at Farley so that photo identification badges for non-SNC employees that have been granted unescorted access into protected and vital areas may be taken offsite.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, paragraph (a), SNC 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." Regulation 10 CFR 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 Farley 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 both SNC 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.

Southern Nuclear 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:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of SNC's application. Under the proposed system, each individual who is authorized unescorted access would have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their badge number in the access control system. When an individual

enters the badge into the card reader and places the hand on the measuring surface, the system would record the individual's hand image. The unique characteristics of the hand image would be compared with the previously stored template to verify authorization for entry. Individuals, including SNC employees and contractors, would be allowed to keep their badge when departing the site.

Based on the Sandia report, "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91-0276-UC-906, Unlimited Release, June 1991, that concluded hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance and high detection characteristics, and on its own experience with the current photo-identification system, SNC determined that the proposed hand geometry system would provide the same level of assurance as the current system that access is only granted to authorized individuals. Since both the badge and hand geometry would be necessary for access into the protected areas, the proposed system would provide a positive verification process. Potential loss of a badge by an individual, as a result of taking the badge offsite, would not enable unauthorized entry into protected areas. Southern Nuclear has stated it will implement a process for periodically testing the proposed system to ensure continued overall level of performance equivalent to that specified in the regulation. The Physical Security Plan will be revised to include implementation and testing of the hand geometry access control system and to allow SNC employees and contractors to take their badges offsite.

Southern Nuclear has determined that the proposed hand geometry access control process for identifying personnel will provide the same high assurance objective regarding onsite physical protection as provided by the photo-identification process now in use.

The access process will continue to be under the observation of security personnel. A numbered picture badge identification system will continue to be

used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected areas.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impacts. With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact.

Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological 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 did not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to operation of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, dated June 1972.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy on May 11, 1995, the staff consulted with the Alabama State official, James McNees of the Alabama Department of Public Health, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

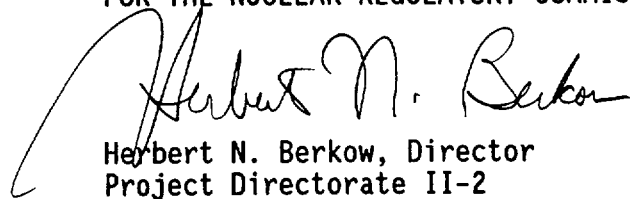
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption. Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, 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 April 3, 1995, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC at the local public document room located at the Houston-Love Memorial Library, 212 W. Burnshaw Street, Post Office Box 1369, Dothan, Alabama.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of May 1995.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Herbert N. Berkow". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

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