

February 18, 1998

Mr. D. N. Morey
Vice President - Farley Project
Southern Nuclear Operating
Company, Inc.
Post Office Box 1295
Birmingham, Alabama 35201-1295

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS - JOSEPH M.
FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NO. M99338 AND M99339)

Dear Mr. Morey:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has forwarded the enclosed "Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for A Hearing" to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

This notice is related to your July 23, 1997, application as supplemented September 30, October 27, and December 18, 1997, and February 12, 1998, that would revise the Technical Specifications (TSs) by relocating the reactor coolant system (RCS) pressure and temperature limits from the TSs to the proposed Pressure Temperature Limits Report in accordance with the guidance provided by Generic Letter 96-03, "Relocation of the Pressure Temperature Limit Curves and Low Temperature Overpressure Protection System Limits." TS 3.4.10.3 would be revised to require that two residual heat removal system suction relief valves be operable or that the RCS be vented at RCS indicated cold leg temperatures less than or equal to 325 °F. In addition, a new TS would be added to limit the operation of more than one reactor coolant pump below 110 °F.

Sincerely,
ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:
Jacob I. Zimmerman, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-348 and 50-364

Enclosure: Notice

cc w/encl: See next page

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

February 18, 1998

Mr. D. N. Morey
Vice President - Farley Project
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob I. Zimmerman".

Jacob I. Zimmerman, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-348 and 50-364

Enclosure: Notice

cc w/encl: See next page

Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant

cc:

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

Mr. Mark Ajluni, 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
Post Office 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
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, S.W., Suite 23T85
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY, INC., ET AL.
DOCKET NOS. 50-348 AND 50-364

NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSES. PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-2 and NPF-8, issued to the Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC), Inc., et al. (the licensee) for operation of the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, located in Houston County, Alabama.

The proposed amendments would revise the Technical Specifications (TSs) by relocating the reactor coolant system (RCS) pressure and temperature limits from the TSs to the proposed Pressure Temperature Limits Report in accordance with the guidance provided by Generic Letter 96-03, "Relocation of the Pressure Temperature Limit Curves and Low Temperature Overpressure Protection System Limits." TS 3.4.10.3 would be revised to require that two residual heat removal system suction relief valves be operable or that the RCS be vented at RCS indicated cold leg temperatures less than or equal to 325 °F. In addition, a new TS would be added to limit the operation of more than one reactor coolant pump below 110 °F.

The July 23, 1997, application was previously noticed in the FEDERAL REGISTER on September 10, 1997 (62 FR 47699). In addition, the December 18, 1997, supplement provided additional information that revised the original licensee's evaluation of the no significant hazards consideration and, therefore, was noticed in the FEDERAL REGISTER on January 14, 1998

(63 FR 2281). The February 12, 1998, supplement provided additional information that revised the licensee's evaluation of the no significant hazards consideration. Therefore, renotification of the Commission's proposed determination of no significant hazards consideration is necessary.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendments, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendments would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (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. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

1. The proposed changes do not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed removal of the Reactor Coolant System (RCS) pressure temperature (P-T) limits from the Technical Specifications (TSs) and relocation to the proposed Pressure Temperature Limits Report (PTLR) in accordance with the guidance provided by Generic Letter (GL) 96-03 is administrative in that the requirements for the P-T limits are unchanged. The P-T limits proposed for inclusion in the PTLR are based on the fluence associated with 2775 MW thermal power and operation through 21.9 effective full power years (EFPY) for Unit 1 and 33.8 EFPY for Unit 2. GL 96-03 requires that the P-T limits be generated in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR [Part] 50, Appendices G and H, and be documented in an NRC-approved methodology incorporated by reference in the TSs. Accordingly, the proposed curves have been generated using the NRC-approved methods described in WCAP-14040-NP-A, Revision 2, as modified at the direction of the NRC Staff, and meet the requirements of 10 CFR [Part] 50, Appendices G and H. TS 3.4.10.1 will continue to require that the RCS pressure and temperature be

limited in accordance with the limits specified in the PTLR. The NRC-approval document will be specified in TS 6.9.1.15, and NRC approval will be required in the form of a TS Amendment prior to changing the methodology. Use of P-T limit curves generated using the NRC-approved methods will provide additional protection for the integrity of the reactor vessel, thereby assuring that the reactor vessel is capable of providing its function as a radiological barrier.

TS 3.4.10.3 for Farley Nuclear Plant (FNP) Unit 1 and Unit 2 provides the operability requirements for RCS low temperature overpressure protection (LTOP). Specifically, TS 3.4.10.3 will be revised to require that two residual heat removal (RHR) system suction relief valves (RHRRVs) be operable or that the RCS be vented at RCS indicated cold leg temperatures less than or equal to 325°F. The higher temperature requirement for LTOP will provide additional assurance that overpressure protection will be available at low temperatures. Consistent with GL 96-03, the Farley Unit 1 and Unit 2 requirements for LTOP will be retained in TS 3.4.10.3 and will be evaluated in accordance with the proposed methodology.

Based on the above evaluation, the proposed changes do not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. The proposed changes do not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

As stated above, the proposed changes to remove the RCS P-T limits from the TSs and relocate them to the proposed PTLR are administrative in nature. Consistent with the guidance provided by GL 96-03, the proposed P-T limits contained in the proposed PTLR meet the requirements of 10 CFR [Part] 50, Appendices G and H, and were generated using the NRC-approved methods described in WCAP-14040-NP-A, Revision 2, as modified at the direction of the NRC Staff. The proposed changes do not result in a physical change to the plant or add any new or different operating requirements on plant systems, structures, or components with the exception of limiting the number of operating RCPs at RCS temperatures below 110°F, increasing the temperature requirement at which the RHR relief valves are required to be operational, and establishing a higher minimum boltup temperature. Limiting the number of operating RCPs below 110°F results in a reduction in the [D]P between the reactor vessel bellline and the RHRRVs, thereby providing additional margin to limits of Appendix G. Provisions are made to allow the start of a second RCP at temperatures below 110°F in order to secure the pump that was originally operating without interrupting RCS flow. The LTOP enable temperature will be increased and will exceed the minimum LTOP enable temperature determined as described in WCAP-14040-NP-A, Rev. 2, thereby providing additional assurance that the LTOP system will be available to protect the RCS in the event of an overpressure transient at RCS temperatures at or below 325°F.

As stated in the above response, implementation of the proposed changes do not result in a significant increase in the probability of a new or different accident (i.e., loss of reactor vessel integrity). The RCS P-T limits will continue to meet the requirements of 10 CFR [Part] 50, Appendices G and H, and will be generated in accordance with the NRC approved methodology described in WCAP-14040-NP-A, Revision 2, as modified at the direction of the NRC Staff. Therefore, the proposed changes do not result in a significant increase in the possibility of a new or different accident from any previously evaluated.

3. The proposed changes do not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The margin of safety is not affected by the removal of the RCS P-T limits from the TSs and relocating them to the proposed PTLR. The RCS P-T limits will continue to meet the requirements of 10 CFR [Part] 50, Appendices G and H. To provide additional assurance that the P-T limits continue to meet the requirements of Appendices G and H, TS 6.9.1.15 will require the use of the NRC-approved methodology to generate P-T limits. The RCS LTOP requirements will be retained in TS 3.4.10.3 due to use of the RHRRVs for LTOP, consistent with the guidance provided by GL 96-03, and will be verified to provide adequate protection of the reactor coolant system against the limits of Appendix G. The LTOP enable temperature will be increased to 325°F and will exceed the LTOP enable temperature determined in accordance with the NRC-approved methodology, thus protecting the RCS in the event of a low temperature overpressure transient over a broader range of temperatures than required by WCAP-14040-NP-A, Rev. 2. Administrative procedures will preclude operation of the RCS at temperatures below the minimum boltup temperature for the reactor vessel head, thus precluding the possibility of tensioning the reactor vessel head at RCS temperatures below the minimum boltup temperature. Operation of the plant in accordance with the RCS P-T limits specified in the PTLR and continued operation of the LTOP system in accordance with TS 3.4.10.3 will continue to meet the requirements of 10 CFR [Part] 50, Appendices G and H, and will, therefore, assure that a margin of safety is not significantly decreased as the result of the proposed changes.

Based on the preceding analysis, SNC has determined that removal of the RCS P-T limits from the TS and relocation to the proposed PTLR will not significantly increase the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated, create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated, or involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. SNC therefore concludes that the proposed changes meet the requirements of 10 CFR 50.92(c) and does not involve a significant hazards consideration.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a notice of issuance and provide for opportunity for a hearing after issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D59, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By March 25, 1998, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714 which is available 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 Houston-Love Memorial Library, 212 W. Burdeshaw Street, Post Office Box 1369, Dothan, Alabama. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, will rule on the request and/or petition; and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) the nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as

to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. Petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a genuine dispute exists with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

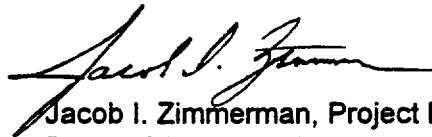
A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and to M. Stanford Blanton, Esq., Balch and Bingham, Post Office Box 306, 1710 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama 35201, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendments dated February 12, 1998, 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 Houston-Love Memorial Library, 212 W. Burdeshaw Street, Post Office Box 1369, Dothan, Alabama.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of February 1998.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Jacob I. Zimmerman, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation