

October 5, 1999

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

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SUBJECT: JOSEPH M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2
RE: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RELATED TO CONVERTING TO
IMPROVED TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS (TAC NOS. MA1364 AND MA1365)

Dear Mr. Morey:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application of March 12, 1998, supplemented by your letters of April 24, 1998, August 20, 1998, November 20, 1998, February 3, 1999, February 20, 1999, April 30, 1999 (two letters), June 30, 1999, July 27, 1999, August 19, 1999, August 30, 1999, and September 15, 1999. The proposed amendments fully convert your current Technical Specifications to Improved Technical Specifications based on NUREG-1431, "Standard Technical Specifications, Westinghouse Plants," Revision 1, of April 1995.

We are forwarding the assessment to the Office of the *Federal Register* for publication.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

L. Mark Padovan, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
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

October 5, 1999

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

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "L. Mark Padovan", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

L. Mark Padovan, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-348 and 50-364

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cc w/encl: See next page

Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant

cc:

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY, INC.

ALABAMA POWER COMPANY

DOCKET NOS. 50-348 AND 50-364

JOSEPH M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would fully convert SNC's current technical specifications (CTS) to Improved Technical Specifications (ITS) based on NUREG - 1431, "Standard Technical Specifications, Westinghouse Plants," Revision 1, of April 1995. The proposed action is in accordance with SNC's application of March 12, 1998, supplemented by SNC's letters of April 24, 1998, August 20, 1998, November 20, 1998, February 3, 1999, February 20, 1999, April 30, 1999 (two letters), June 30, 1999, July 27, 1999, August 19, 1999, August 30, 1999, and September 15, 1999.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

Implementing ITS at Farley would benefit nuclear safety. The Commission's "NRC Interim Policy Statement on Technical Specification Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors,"

(52 FR 3788, February 6, 1987), and later the Commission's "Final Policy Statement on Technical Specification Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors," (58 FR 39132, July 22, 1993), formalized this need. Each reactor vendor owners group (OG) and the NRC staff developed standard TS (STS) to aid in producing individual plant ITS. NRC NUREG-1432 contains the STS for Westinghouse-designed reactor plants. The NRC Committee to Review Generic Requirements reviewed NUREG-1432, noted the safety merits of the STS, and indicated that it supported operating plants converting to the STS. SNC used NUREG-1432 as the basis for developing the Farley, Units 1 and 2, ITS.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed TS conversion does not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and does not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents.

Changes that are administrative in nature have no effect on the technical content of the ITS and are acceptable. The increased clarity and understanding these changes bring to the ITS are expected to improve the operator's control of the plant in normal and accident conditions.

Relocating CTS requirements to SNC-controlled documents does not change the requirements. SNC may make future changes to these requirements, but SNC must make the changes under 10 CFR 50.59 or other NRC-approved control methods. This assures that SNC will maintain adequate requirements. All such CTS relocations conform to NUREG-1432 guidelines and the Final Policy Statement, and are therefore acceptable.

Changes involving more restrictive requirements are likely to enhance the safety of plant operations and are acceptable.

The NRC has reviewed all changes involving less restrictive requirements. Removing CTS requirements that provide little or no safety benefit or place unnecessary burdens on SNC is justified. In most cases, TS relaxations previously granted on a plant-specific basis resulted

from generic NRC action or from agreements reached during discussions with the OG and are acceptable for Farley, Units 1 and 2. The NRC reviewed the generic relaxations contained in NUREG-1432 and SNC's deviations from NUREG-1432 and determined they are acceptable for Farley, Units 1 & 2.

In summary, the NRC determined that the Farley, Units 1 and 2, ITS provide control of plant operations such that there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will be adequately protected.

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 off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological 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 denying 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 not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for Farley, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on September 24, 1999, the staff consulted with the Alabama State official, Mr. Kirk Whatley of the Office of Radiation Control, Alabama Department of Public Health, 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 action 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 SNC's letter of March 12, 1998, supplemented by SNC's letters of April 24, 1998, August 20, 1998, November 20, 1998, February 3, 1999, February 20, 1999, April 30, 1999 (two letters), June 30, 1999, July 27, 1999, August 19, 1999, August 30, 1999, and September 15, 1999, which are 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 36302

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 5th day of October 1999.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



L. Mark Padovan, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation