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

August 11, 1989

Docket Nos. 50-327
and 50-328

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
Senior Vice President, Nuclear Power
Tennessee Valley Authority
6N 38A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

SUBJECT: EXIGENT AMENDMENT FOR INOPERABLE MANUAL ISOLATION VALVES, REACTOR VESSEL HEAD VENT SYSTEM (TAC 74133/74134) - SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

The Commission has issued the enclosed Amendment No. 123 to Facility Operating License No. DPR-77 and Amendment No. 112 to Facility Operating License No. DPR-79 for the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, respectively. These amendments are in response to your application dated August 2, 1989.

These amendments temporarily revise Surveillance Requirement (SR) 4.4.11.a of Section 3/4.4.11, Reactor Coolant System Vents, of the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, Technical Specifications (TS). The changes add a footnote to the requirement for both units that the manual isolation valves for the reactor vessel head vent system must be locked open. The footnote states that "the requirement to verify that the upstream manual isolation valves are locked in the open position is waived until the Cycle 4 refueling outage. This waiver is granted on a one-time basis. At the first Mode 5 outage following the issuance of the above waiver, a flow verification test will be performed to verify that the manual isolation valves are open." The changes apply for both Units 1 and 2 until the next refueling outage, which is the Cycle 4 refueling outage for both units. The Cycle 4 refueling outages are scheduled for Spring of 1990 for Unit 1 and Fall of 1990 for Unit 2.

As discussed in the enclosed Safety Evaluation, the Commission (1) granted you, at 4:00 p.m. on July 31, 1989, a Waiver of Compliance to return power to the reactor vessel head vent system for both units until the staff could act on this application but not later than August 27, 1989 and (2) determined pursuant to 10 CFR 50.91 that these amendments should be implemented as soon as possible. The amendments permit the licensee to continue operating the units until the Cycle 4 refueling outage. The changes have no adverse effect on safety and would be beneficial to overall plant safety because the units would not be forced into an unnecessary shutdown. Because the manual isolation valves are not locked, the reactor vessel head vent system was considered inoperable and the TS require that power be removed from the system. With these amendments, the head vent system is operable and the Waiver of Compliance is no longer in effect.

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The Waiver of Compliance was temporary until this application for amendments was acted on but for not later than August 27, 1989. Consequently, the NRC staff determined that exigent circumstances existed which justify reducing the public notice period normally provided for licensing amendments. A Public Notice that the NRC staff proposed to amend the TS was published in the Chattanooga New-Free Press and the Chattanooga Times on Tuesday, April 8, 1989. The Public Notice stated that the NRC staff proposed to issue these amendments at the close of business of August 10, 1989.

A Notice of Issuance of these amendments will be included in the Commission's Bi-Weekly Federal Register Notice.

Sincerely,
Original signed by

B. D. Liaw, Director
TVA Projects Division
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:
1. Amendment No. 123 to License No. DPR-77
2. Amendment No. 112 to License No. DPR-79
3. Safety Evaluation

cc w/enclosures:
See next page

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

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

DOCKET NO. 50-327

SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 1

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 123
License No. DPR-77

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

   A. The application for amendment by Tennessee Valley Authority (the licensee) dated August 2, 1989, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations 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;

   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 amended by changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment and paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. DPR-77 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendices A and B, as revised through Amendment No. 123, are hereby incorporated in the license. The licensee 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

B. D. Liaw, Director
TVA Projects Division
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment:
Changes to the Technical
Specifications

Date of Issuance: August 11, 1989

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NO. 123

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-77

DOCKET NO. 50-327

Revise the Appendix A Technical Specifications by removing the pages identified below and inserting the enclosed pages. The revised pages are identified by the captioned amendment number and contain marginal lines indicating the area of change.

REMOVE	INSERT
3/4 4-28	3/4 4-28

3/4.4.11 REACTOR COOLANT SYSTEM VENTS

LIMITING CONDITION FOR OPERATION

3.4.11 Two Reactor Coolant System Vent (RCSV) paths shall be OPERABLE. *

APPLICABILITY: MODES 1, 2, and 3.

ACTION:

a. With only one RCSV path OPERABLE, STARTUP and/or POWER OPERATION may continue provided the inoperable path is maintained closed with power removed from the valve actuators; restore the inoperable path to OPERABLE status within 30 days; or be in HOT STANDBY within 6 hours and HOT SHUTDOWN within the following 6 hours.

b. With no RCSV path OPERABLE, restore at least one path to OPERABLE status within 72 hours or be in HOT STANDBY within 6 hours and HOT SHUTDOWN within the following 6 hours.

SURVEILLANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.4.11 Each RCSV path shall be demonstrated OPERABLE at least once per 18 months by:

a.# Verifying that the upstream manual isolation valves are locked in the open position for the head vent.

b. Operating each remotely controlled valve through at least one cycle from the control room, and

c. Verifying flow through the RCSV paths during venting.

*Use of Power Operated Relief Valves (PORV's) with associated block valves is considered one system. Closure of one or both block valves does not make the vent path inoperable provided the valve(s) can be opened.

#The requirement to verify that the upstream manual isolation valves are locked in the open position is waived until the Cycle 4 refueling outage. This waiver is granted on a one-time basis. At the first Mode 5 outage following issuance of the above waiver, a flow verification test will be performed to verify that the manual isolation valves are open.

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

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

DOCKET NO. 50-328

SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 2

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 112
License No. DPR-79

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

A. The application for amendment by Tennessee Valley Authority (the licensee) dated August 2, 1989, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations 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;

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 amended by changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment and paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. DPR-79 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendices A and B, as revised through Amendment No. 112, are hereby incorporated in the license. The licensee 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

B. D. Liaw, Director
TVA Projects Division
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment:
Changes to the Technical
Specifications

Date of Issuance: August 11, 1989

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NO. 112

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-79

DOCKET NO. 50-328

Revise the Appendix A Technical Specifications by removing the pages identified below and inserting the enclosed pages. The revised pages are identified by the captioned amendment number and contain marginal lines indicating the area of change.

REMOVE	INSERT
3/4 4-34	3/4 4-34

3/4.4.11 REACTOR COOLANT SYSTEM VENTS

LIMITING CONDITION FOR OPERATION

3.4.11 Two Reactor Coolant System Vent (RCSV) paths shall be OPERABLE. *

APPLICABILITY: MODES 1, 2, and 3.

ACTION:

a. With only one RCSV path OPERABLE, STARTUP and/or POWER OPERATION may continue provided the inoperable path is maintained closed with power removed from the valve actuators; restore the inoperable path to OPERABLE status within 30 days; or be in HOT STANDBY within 6 hours and HOT SHUTDOWN within the following 6 hours.

b. With no RCSV path OPERABLE, restore at least one path to OPERABLE status within 72 hours or be in HOT STANDBY within 6 hours and HOT SHUTDOWN within the following 6 hours.

SURVEILLANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.4.11 Each RCSV path shall be demonstrated OPERABLE at least once per 18 months by:

a.# Verifying that the upstream manual isolation valves are locked in the open position for the head vent.

b. Operating each remotely controlled valve through at least one cycle from the control room, and

c. Verifying flow through the RCSV paths during venting.

*Use of Power Operated Relief Valves (PORV's) with associated block valves is considered one system. Closure of one or both block valves does not make the vent path inoperable provided the valve(s) can be opened.

#The requirement to verify that the upstream manual isolation valves are locked in the open position is waived until the Cycle 4 refueling outage. This waiver is granted on a one-time basis. At the first Mode 5 outage following issuance of the above waiver, a flow verification test will be performed to verify that the manual isolation valves are open.

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

ENCLOSURE 3

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

SUPPORTING AMENDMENT NO. 123 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-77

AND AMENDMENT NO. 112 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-79

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

DOCKET NOS. 50-327 AND 50-328

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated August 2, 1989, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) requested exigent amendments to the operating licenses for the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2. If approved, the amendments would temporarily revise Surveillance Requirement (SR) 4.4.11.a, "Reactor Coolant System Vents," of the Sequoyah Technical Specifications (TS). This is one of the SRs to determine if the reactor vessel head vent system is operable. The proposed changes are to add a footnote to the requirement for each unit that the manual isolation valves for the reactor vessel head vent system must be locked open. The footnote states that "the requirement to verify that the upstream manual isolation valves are locked in the open position is waived until the cycle 4 refueling outage. This waiver is granted on a one-time basis. At the first Mode 5 outage following the issuance of the above waiver, a flow verification test will be performed to verify that the manual isolation valves are open." The changes would apply for both Units 1 and 2 until the next refueling outage, which is the Cycle 4 refueling outage for both units. The Cycle 4 refueling outages are scheduled for Spring of 1990 for Unit 1 and Fall of 1990 for Unit 2. This is TVA TS change request 89-38.

As discussed below, the Commission determined, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.91, that these amendments should be implemented as soon as possible. A Public Notice that the NRC staff proposed to amend the operating licenses of Unit 1 and Unit 2 was published in the Chattanooga News-Free Press and the Chattanooga Times on Tuesday, August 8, 1989.

2.0 EVALUATION

The purpose of the reactor vessel head vent system is to vent non-condensible gases and steam from the reactor coolant system, if needed, to maintain core cooling. These gases may inhibit core cooling during natural circulation during post-accident conditions. The head vent system is connected to the reactor vessel head by a pipe with two manual isolation valves in series. The head vent system is downstream of these manual isolation valves.

On July 28, 1989, TVA discovered that the two manual isolation valves upstream of the reactor vessel head vent system for each unit were verified open before the restart of each unit from the last refueling outage but not locked open as required by the TS. Except for this, the head vent system is operable. The requirement that these valves be locked open did not exist at the time the units restarted. The units were in compliance with their TS when they restarted from their last refueling outage but they came into non-compliance with their TS when the amendments issuing the new requirements on the head vent system were issued on June 1, 1989.

The valves cannot now be locked because the units are at 100% power and the valves are inaccessible when the reactor is at power because of their proximity to the reactor vessel head and the high radiation levels in that area. Also, the missile shields above the reactor vessels would have to be removed. The TS require that if the manual isolation valves cannot be locked the units must be shut down thirty days later, which would be August 27, 1989. The proposed changes would allow both units to continue operating with the manual isolation valves not being locked until the Cycle 4 refueling outage for each unit.

In its letter dated August 2, 1989, TVA explained that flow verification tests of the head vent system conducted during startup for each unit provide further assurance that the manual isolation valves are open. Because of the relatively short time between when the flow tests were run and when the valves became inaccessible during the startup of the units, it is unlikely that the valves could have been accidently closed. The manual isolation valves are inside containment for each unit and access to the containments is controlled. However, in order to provide further verification that the manual isolation valves are open, TVA stated that it will perform a second set of flow verification tests on the head vent systems when each unit next enters Mode 5 or cold shutdown.

In its letter dated August 2, 1989, TVA provided the following details concerning its conclusion that the manual isolation valves are open. The manual isolation valves on Unit 1 were verified open on August 5, 1988 by a two-person sign-off. On August 26, 1988, flow was verified through the head vent system during performance of Surveillance Instruction (SI) 166.41 which indicates again that the manual isolation valves in Unit 1 are open. Following the performance of SI-166.41, access to the manual isolation valves was restricted by removing the scaffolding from lower containment and setting the missile shield in place in preparation for entry into Mode 4. The missile shield was set in place on September 24, 1988, and Unit 1 entered Mode 4 on September 27, 1988.

The manual isolation valves on Unit 2 were verified open on March 10, 1989 by a two-person sign-off. On March 26, 1989, flow was verified through the system during performance of SI-166.41 which indicates that the manual isolation valves in Unit 2 are open. Following the performance of SI-166.41, access to the manual isolation valves was restricted by removing the scaffolding from lower containment and setting the missile shield in place in preparation for entry into Mode 4. The missile shield was set in place on March 26, 1989. The missile shield was removed to facilitate leakage repair work and reset on March 30, 1989, and Unit 2 entered Mode 4 on April 5, 1989.

The manual isolation valves on each unit have been verified open by two independent means and the head vent system is available to perform its intended

function. Therefore, it is concluded that locking the manual isolation valves is not needed to meet the underlying purpose of SR 4.4.11.a until the next refueling outage. A second flow test during the next entry into Mode 5 would be a further verification that the valves are open. Requiring the flow verification tests to verify the manual isolation valves are open was not considered when the requirements on the reactor vessel vent system were added to the TS because they were not proposed by TVA. The proposed changes provide an alternative, reliable method to assure the manual isolation valves are open.

The two methods of assuring the manual isolation valves are open are the following: (1) lock the valves open and (2) conduct a flow verification test. The two methods are comparably reliable. They are both conducted after the valves are verified open by a two-person sign-off and before the valves are made inaccessible. The first method assures that the position of the valves can not be accidently changed but it relies on the individuals doing the two-person sign-off correctly to assure the valves are open. The second method assures that the valves have been left open but it relies on the controlled access to the containment that the position of the valves is not accidentally changed.

The manual isolation valves would have to be locked open for each unit to return to power from the Cycle 4 refueling outage.

Based on the above, the staff concludes that the proposed changes are acceptable. The second set of flow verification tests will be conducted in Mode 5 to prevent overstressing the solenoid-operated valve actuators in the head vent system, which might occur if the tests were conducted at full system pressure.

3.0 EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES

The Commission has determined that these changes should be implemented as soon as possible. The amendments would permit the licensee to continue operating the units until the Cycle 4 refueling outage. The proposed changes have no adverse effect on safety and would be beneficial to overall plant safety because the units would not be forced into an unnecessary shutdown. Although the manual isolation valves are open, they are not locked in this position. Therefore, the reactor vessel head vent system is considered inoperable and the TS require that power be removed from the system. The staff issued a Waiver of Compliance on July 31, 1989 to return power to the reactor vessel head vent system. This Waiver of Compliance from the TS is temporary until this amendment request is acted on. Consequently, the NRC staff has determined that exigent circumstances exist which justify reducing the public notice period normally provided for licensing amendments and proposes to issue the amendment at the close of business of August 10, 1989.

4.0 FINAL NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS CONSIDERATION

The licensee and the NRC staff have evaluated these proposed changes with regard to the determination of whether or not a significant hazards consideration is involved. Operation of Sequoyah, Units 1 and 2, in accordance with the proposed amendment will not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated. The reactor vessel head vent system is designed to vent non-condensible gases and steam from the reactor coolant system, if needed, to maintain adequate core cooling following an accident. This system normally is not operated. The only purpose of the

manual isolation valves is to isolate the head vent system from the reactor vessel. These valves must be open when the units are operating for the head vent system to function. The assurance that the valves are open for both units is the double verification check of valve position and the flow verification test. The proposed changes provide an alternate, comparably reliable method to the locked valves to assure the manual isolation valves are open. Therefore, because the head vent system remains fully operational in the event of an accident, the proposed change does not affect the assumptions or consequences of any previously analyzed accident.

The proposed amendment will not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously analyzed. The proposed change does not affect the function or the design of the head vent system or of any other safety system in either unit. The proposed changes only provide an alternative method of assuring the manual isolation valves are open. The head vent system remains available to perform its intended function.

The proposed amendment will not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety because the changes propose a comparably reliable method to assure valve position. The head vent system is still available to perform its intended function.

The requested amendment has been evaluated against the standards in 10 CFR 50.92 and the NRC staff has determined that the requested amendments involve no significant hazards considerations. The changes do not significantly increase the possibility or consequences of any accident previously considered, nor create the possibility of an accident of a different kind, nor significantly decrease any margin of safety.

5.0 WAIVER OF COMPLIANCE

On July 28, 1989, the two manual isolation valves upstream of the head vent system for each unit were discovered to have been verified open before the restart of each unit from the last refueling outage but not locked open as required by the TS. The units were in compliance with their TS when they restarted from their last refueling outage but they came into non-compliance with their TS when the amendments issuing the new requirements on the head vent system were issued on June 1, 1989. The valves cannot now be locked because the units are at 100% power and the valves are inaccessible when the reactor is at power. With the head vent system of each unit considered inoperable, the TS require that power be removed from the solenoid-operated valve actuators in the head vent systems and, if the manual isolation valves cannot be locked, the units be shut down thirty days later, which would be August 27, 1989. To comply with the TS, TVA removed the power from the valve actuators on July 28, 1989.

By letter dated July 28, 1989, TVA requested the waiver of compliance to restore power to the valve actuators until it could submit this exigent TS change to prevent the plant shutdown on August 27, 1989 and the NRC staff acts on the TS change. TVA stated that it was prudent to restore power to the four valve actuators because the configuration control process at Sequoyah provides assurance that the manual isolation valves are, in fact, open and the head vent system would then be fully operational in the event of an accident.

On July 31, 1989, in a telephone conference, TVA staff explained that flow verification tests of the head vent system conducted during startup for each unit provides further assurance that the manual isolation valves should be open. Because of the relatively short time between when the flow tests were run and when the valves became inaccessible during the startup of the units, it is unlikely that the valves could have been accidently closed. However, in order to provide final verification that the manual isolation valves are open, TVA agreed to perform a second set of flow verification tests on the head vent systems when each unit next enters Mode 5 or cold shutdown. These flow tests would be conducted in Mode 5 to prevent overstressing the solenoid-operated valve actuators in the head vent system, which might occur if the tests were to be conducted at full system pressure.

The staff concluded that there was a basis for it to consider amending the TS for Sequoyah to prevent the shutdown of both units. It was, therefore, prudent to return power to the solenoid operated valves in the head vent systems for both units because there is assurance that the manual isolation valves are open and it is not likely that they would have closed since the flow verification tests were performed even though they were not locked open. At 4:00 p.m. on July 31, 1989, the staff granted TVA the Waiver of Compliance to return power to the head vent systems for both units until the staff can act on the proposed TS change but for no later than August 27, 1989. This was documented in the staff's letter to TVA dated July 31, 1989.

6.0 CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE

On August 7 and 10, 1989, the State of Tennessee was contact by telephone and the proposed amendment was discussed. A copy of the Public Notice issued by the staff with its preliminary determination of no significant hazards consideration was telecopied to the State. On August 10, 1989, the State contact had no comments on this determination.

7.0 RESPONSES FROM THE PUBLIC

In The Public Notice for this proposed action, the NRC staff stated that all comments received by the close of businss on August 10, 1989 would be considered in reaching a final determination of no significant hazards consideration. The staff received two telephone calls from the public before the close of business on August 10, 1989. There were no comments on the amendments and no requests for hearing.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

These amendments involve a change to a requirement with respect to the installation or use of a facility component located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20 and changes to the surveillance requirements. The 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 previously issued a proposed finding that these amendments involve no significant hazards consideration and there has been no public comment on such finding. 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 nor environmental assessment need to be prepared in connection with the issuance of these amendments.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The staff 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, and (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and the issuance of the amendments will not be inimical to the common defense and security nor to the health and safety of the public.

Principal Contributor: J. Donohew

Dated: August 11, 1989