

December 19, 1990

Docket Nos. 50-259, 50-260
and 50-296

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: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT -
BROWNS FERRY EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR 55.45(b)(2)(iii) AND (iv)
(TAC NOS. 77141, 77142 AND 77143)

In a letter dated July 13, 1990, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) requested a temporary exemption from the filing requirements of 10 CFR 55.45(b)(2)(iii). Furthermore, TVA requested a temporary exemption from 10 CFR 55.45 (b)(2)(iv) that would allow TVA to continue administering the simulation portion of operating tests on the current Browns Ferry simulator until the new simulator is certified. The staff is currently evaluating TVA's requests.

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" regarding TVA's exemption requests. This Environmental Assessment has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Thierry Ross, Project Manager
Project Directorate II-4
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/enclosure:
See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONTENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITYDOCKET NO. 50-259, 50-260, 50-296ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ANDFINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.45(b)(2)(iii) and (iv) to Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA, the licensee), for the Browns Ferry Nuclear (BFN) Plant, Units 1, 2, and 3 located in Limestone County, Alabama.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action

A revision to 10 CFR Part 55, "Operators' Licenses," became effective on May 26, 1987, which established requirements for the administration of operating tests on nuclear power plant simulators. These regulations, in conjunction with 10 CFR 50.54(i-1), require facility licensees to use simulation facilities when administering operating tests for initial licensing and requalification. These regulations further require that a certified or NRC-approved simulation facility must be used to administer operating tests after May 26, 1991. By letter dated July 13, 1990, TVA requested a temporary exemption from the schedule requirements for certification of a plant-referenced simulator. TVA intends to significantly improve its simulator by upgrading major hardware and software components of the simulator complex. As such, TVA has requested additional time (i.e. until the end of 1991) before completing final certification of the simulator.

The proposed action is in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12 and 55.11, "Specific Exemptions", and is based upon the information provided to the NRC in the licensee's request dated July 13, 1990.

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The Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed exemption is needed to avoid the unnecessary regulatory exercise of certifying the existing simulator, with its host of exceptions, rather than waiting nine months and certifying the newly upgraded simulator.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The proposed action will have no incremental impact on the environment because the exemption only delays final certification of the simulator until upgrades are completed. The exemption will merely defer the required administrative burden of reporting that certification is complete for a nominal period of time to allow the licensee an opportunity to more fully comply with the spirit of the rule. In the mean time, operators will continue to be trained and examined on the existing simulator as they have since 1976. Final certification of the new simulator, and compliance with 10 CFR 55.45, shall be accomplished by December 31, 1991.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that the environmental effects of the proposed action are not significant, any alternative with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated.

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested exemption. This would not reduce the environmental impacts attributed to this facility and would still result in operators being trained and examined on the current facility.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to operation of the BFN facility.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The Commission's staff reviewed the licensee's request and did not consult other agencies or persons.

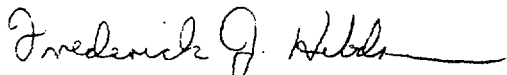
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption. Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, we conclude 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 July 13, 1990 which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. and at the Local Public Document Room located in the Athens Public Library, South Street, Athens, Alabama 35611.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 19th day of December 1990.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION


Frederick J. Hebdon, Director
Project Directorate, II-4
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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