

Docket No. 50-261

Mr. Lynn W. Eury
Executive Vice President
Power Supply
Carolina Power & Light Company
Post Office Box 1551
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

Dear Mr. Eury:

SUBJECT: FACILITY OPERATION WITH HIGHER FUEL ENRICHMENT - H. B. ROBINSON
ELECTRIC PLANT, UNIT NO. 2 (TAC NO. 74372)

Enclosed is a copy of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact relative to the H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit No. 2, for your information. This assessment relates to plant operation with higher enriched Uranium-235 fuel.

This assessment has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Ronnie Lo, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate II-1
Division of Reactor Projects I/II

Enclosure:
Environmental Assessment

cc w/enclosure:
See next page

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONCAROLINA POWER & LIGHT COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-261ENVIRONMENTAL 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 No. DPR-23 to the Carolina Power & Light Company (CP&L or the licensee), for the H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit No. 2, located in Darlington County, South Carolina.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action:

The proposed amendment would revise the provisions in the Technical Specifications (TS) relating to fuel enrichment.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's applications dated August 4, November 18, and December 13, 1989.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed changes are needed so that the licensee can use higher enrichment fuel, to be delivered for Cycle 14 operation.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revisions to the Technical Specifications. The proposed revisions would permit use of fuel enriched with Uranium 235 in excess of 4 weight percent and up to 4.2 weight

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percent. The licensee is currently limited to operation with up to 3.9 weight percent enriched fuel. While fuel burn-up may be greater than that experienced under the current limitation, the licensee does not expect the fuel burn-up to be higher than the currently approved peak level for this proposed amendment. The safety considerations associated with reactor operation with higher enrichment have been evaluated by the NRC staff. The staff has concluded that such changes would not adversely affect plant safety. The proposed changes have no adverse effect on the probability of any accident. No changes are being made in the types or amounts of any radiological effluents that may be released offsite. There is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts of reactor operation with higher enrichment and extended irradiation, the proposed changes to the TS involve systems located within the restricted area, as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They do not affect nonradiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact.

The environmental impacts of transportation resulting from the use of higher enrichment fuel are within the bounds of the staff's earlier assessment entitled, "NRC Assessment of the Environmental Effects of Transportation Resulting from Extended Fuel Enrichment and Irradiation" (53 FR 30355), dated July 7, 1988. As indicated therein, the environmental cost contribution of the proposed increase in the fuel enrichment and irradiation limits is either unchanged or may in fact be reduced from those summarized in Table S-4 as set forth in 10 CFR 51.52(c).

Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological or nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment.

Alternative to the Proposed Action:

Since the Commission concluded that there are no significant environmental effects that would result from the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated.

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested amendment. This would not reduce environmental impacts of plant operation and would result in reduced operational flexibility.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the "Final Environmental Statement related to the operation of the H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit No. 2" dated April 1975.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

The NRC 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 license amendment.

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 application for amendment dated August 4, 1989, and submittals November 18 and December 13, 1989, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. and at the Hartsville Memorial Library, Home and Fifth Avenues, Hartsville, South Carolina 29535.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original Signed By:

E. G. Tourigny, Acting Director
Project Directorate II-1
Division of Reactor Projects I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCE

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