

March 12, 2002

Mr. Gregg R. Overbeck  
Senior Vice President, Nuclear  
Arizona Public Service Company  
P. O. Box 52034  
Phoenix, AZ 85072-2034

SUBJECT: PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 1, 2, AND 3 -  
ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS RE: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION 5.6.5b, CORE  
OPERATING LIMITS REPORT (COLR) AND USE OF ZIRLO CLADDING  
MATERIAL (TAC NOS. MB3373, MB3374, AND MB3375)

Dear Mr. Overbeck:

The Commission has issued the enclosed Amendment No. 140 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-41, Amendment No. 140 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-51, and Amendment No. 140 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-74 for the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS), Units 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The amendments consist of changes to the Technical Specifications (TSs) in response to your application dated November 9, 2001 (102-04623). The NRC staff held telephone discussions with your staff on December 18, and 20, 2001, to seek clarification on certain aspects of your November 9, 2001 submittal.

The amendments would revise TS 5.6.5b to add topical report CENPD-404-P-A, "Implementation of ZIRLO™ Cladding Material in CE Nuclear Power Fuel Assembly Designs," into the list of analytical methods used to determine core operating limits and thus, enable use of ZIRLO clad fuel in PVNGS units. Please note that your November 9, 2001, submittal identifies certain regulatory commitments regarding fuel duty index and updates to the PVNGS Updated Final Safety Analysis Report.

A copy of the related Safety Evaluation is also enclosed. The Notice of Issuance will be included in the Commission's next biweekly *Federal Register* notice.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Jack Donohew, Senior Project Manager, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. STN 50-528, STN 50-529,  
and STN 50-530

Enclosures: 1. Amendment No. 140 to NPF-41  
2. Amendment No. 140 to NPF-51  
3. Amendment No. 140 to NPF-74  
4. Safety Evaluation

cc w/encls: See next page

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DISTRIBUTION:

Docket Nos. STN 50-528, STN 50-529  
and STN 50-530

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- 3. Amendment No. 140 to NPF-51
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cc w/encls: See next page

PUBLIC  
PDIV-2 Reading  
RidsNrrDlpmPdiv(SRichards)  
RidsNrrDlpmPdivLpdiv2(SDembek)  
RidsNrrPMJDonohew  
RidsNrrLAMMcAllister  
RidsRgn4MailCenter(KBrockman)  
RidsNrrDripRtsb (WBeckner)  
RidsOgcRp  
RidsAcrsAcnwMailCenter  
UShoop

G.Hill(6)  
L.Hurley, RIV  
DBujol, RIV  
PHarrell, RIV

\* SRXB Memo dated January 25, 2002

Accession No.: **ML020700710**

\*\* See previous concurrence

NRR-058

OFFICE	PDIV-1/PM	PDIV-1/LA	SRXB/SC	OGC	PDIV-2/SC
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DATE	3/7/2002	3/7/02	1/25/02	03/01/2002	3/7/2002

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ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.

DOCKET NO. STN 50-528

PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNIT 1

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 140  
License No. NPF-41

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
  - A. The application for amendment by the Arizona Public Service Company (APS or the licensee) on behalf of itself and the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District, El Paso Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Public Service Company of New Mexico, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Southern California Public Power Authority dated November 9, 2001, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's 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. NPF-41 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 140, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated into this license. APS shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan, except where otherwise stated in specific license conditions.

3. This license amendment is effective as of the date of issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days of the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

**/RA by JEDonoghue for/**  
Stephen Dembek, Chief, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment: Changes to the Technical  
Specifications

Date of Issuance: March 12, 2002

ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.

DOCKET NO. STN 50-529

PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNIT 2

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 140  
License No. NPF-51

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
  - A. The application for amendment by the Arizona Public Service Company (APS or the licensee) on behalf of itself and the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District, El Paso Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Public Service Company of New Mexico, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Southern California Public Power Authority dated November 9, 2001, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's 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. NPF-51 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 140, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated into this license. APS shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan, except where otherwise stated in specific license conditions.

3. This license amendment is effective as of the date of issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days of the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

**/RA by JEDonoghue for/**  
Stephen Dembek, Chief, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment: Changes to the Technical  
Specifications

Date of Issuance: March 12, 2002

ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.

DOCKET NO. STN 50-530

PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNIT 3

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 140  
License No. NPF-74

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
  - A. The application for amendment by the Arizona Public Service Company (APS or the licensee) on behalf of itself and the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District, El Paso Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Public Service Company of New Mexico, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Southern California Public Power Authority dated November 9, 2001, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's 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. NPF-74 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 140, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated into this license. APS shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan, except where otherwise stated in specific license conditions.

3. This license amendment is effective as of the date of issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days of the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

**/RA by JEDonoghue for/**  
Stephen Dembek, Chief, Section 2  
Project Directorate IV  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment: Changes to the Technical  
Specifications

Date of Issuance: March 12, 2002

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NOS. 140, 140, AND 140

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NOS. NPF-41, NPF-51, AND NPF-74

DOCKET NOS. STN 50-528, STN 50-529, AND STN 50-530

Replace the following page of the Appendix A Technical Specifications with the attached revised page. The revised page is identified by amendment number and contains marginal lines indicating the areas of change.

REMOVE

5.6-5

INSERT

5.6-5

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION  
RELATED TO AMENDMENT NO. 140 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-41,  
AMENDMENT NO. 140 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-51,  
AND AMENDMENT NO. 140 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-74  
ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.  
PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 1, 2, AND 3  
DOCKET NOS. STN 50-528, STN 50-529, AND STN 50-530

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated November 9, 2001 (letter number 102-04623), Arizona Public Service Company (APS or the licensee) requested changes to the Technical Specifications (TSs) for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS), Units 1, 2, and 3. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff held telephone discussions with the licensee on December 18 and 20, 2001, to seek clarification on certain aspects of the submittal. Also, in its November 9, 2001 submittal, the licensee identified certain regulatory commitments regarding Fuel Duty Index (FDIm), and updates to PVNGS Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR).

Specifically, the proposed amendments would revise TS 5.6.5b to add topical report CENPD-404-P-A, (Revision 0, CE Nuclear Power LLC Methodology for "Implementation of ZIRLO Cladding Material in CE Nuclear Power Fuel Designs," dated November 2001), to the list of analytical methods used to determine core operating limits and thus, enable use of ZIRLO clad fuel in PVNGS units. PVNGS believes that the use of ZIRLO cladding material will reduce waterside corrosion and spallation currently experienced with the Zircaloy-4 clad fuel rods.

The NRC staff previously reviewed and approved the use of ZIRLO cladding material for use in Combustion Engineering (CE) Nuclear Power (CENP) plants (Safety Evaluation of Topical Report CENPD-404-P, Revision 0, "Implementation of ZIRLO Cladding Material in CE Nuclear Power Fuel Assembly Designs," dated September 12, 2001 and Correction to Safety Evaluation on Topical Report CENPD-404-P, Revision 0, "Implementation of ZIRLO Cladding Material in CE Nuclear Power Fuel Assembly Designs," dated October 17, 2001), subject to plant specific conditions which individual licensees must address in their submittal requesting approval for use of ZIRLO clad fuel pins in their individual units. The individual conditions which must be addressed are as follows:

1. The corrosion limit, as predicted by the best-estimate model will remain below the 100 microns corrosion limit for all locations of the fuel.
2. All the conditions listed in the Safety Evaluation Reports (SERs) for all the CENPD

methodologies used for ZIRLO fuel analysis will continue to be met, except that the use of ZIRLO cladding in addition to Zircaloy-4 cladding is now approved.

3. All CENP methodologies will be used only within the range for which ZIRLO data was acceptable and for which the verification discussed in CENPD-404-P and responses to requests for additional information (RAI) were performed.
4. Until data is available demonstrating the performance of ZIRLO cladding in CENP designed plants, the fuel duty will be limited for each CENP designed plant with some provision for adequate margin to account for variations in core design (e.g., cycle length, plant operating conditions, etc.). Details of this condition will be addressed on a plant specific basis during the approval to use ZIRLO in a specific plant.
5. The burnup limit for this approval is 60 GWD/MTU.

In addition, the topical report which approves the use of ZIRLO clad fuel pins for use in CENP plants, requires the use of specific versions of the Westinghouse Emergency Core Cooling System (ECCS) performance evaluation models for CE designed pressurized-water-reactors (PWRs).

The proposed addition of the topical report to TS 5.6.5b is not the complete citation of the report (i.e., CENPD-404-P-A, Revision 0, dated November 2001), which is given in Section 7, "References," of Attachment 1 to the licensee's application. In the email dated March 1, 2002 (ADAMS Accession No. ML020630199), the licensee stated that the complete citation of the topical report will be put in the Core Operating Limits Report (COLR) document that is submitted to the NRC to meet TS 5.6.5d of the TSs during the implementation of amendments. The email clarifies the information provided in the application and does not change the non significant hazards consideration published in the *Federal Register* (67 FR 2919) on January 22, 2002, for the proposed change to the TSs.

In Attachment 3 to the license's application, the licensee listed two regulatory commitments that it has made with respect to its application for the proposed amendment. The regulatory commitments are (1) the licensee will limit the fuel duty for PVNGS with a provision for adequate margin to account for variations in core design, and this limit will be applicable until data is available demonstrating the performance of ZIRLO cladding at the units, and (2) the licensee will revise the PVNGS UFSAR, as needed, to reflect the changes contained in the amendment to allow the use of ZIRLO cladding.

## 2.0 EVALUATION

PVNGS will use the best-estimate models and methods for calculating the corrosion thickness as described and approved by the NRC staff in CENPD-404-P-A. In addition, the licensee will add the 100 micron corrosion limit to the UFSAR. This is acceptable because it provides them with an approved method for calculating the corrosion thickness and incorporates the 100 micron corrosion limit into the licensing basis of the plant.

PVNGS currently abides by the conditions listed in the SERs of all the CENPD methodologies in its fuel analysis. Following implementation of ZIRLO clad fuel, the licensee will continue to abide by the conditions of the SERs (listed above for CENP-404-P-A). This will be

accomplished by the licensee's quality assurance (QA) process for use of methodologies, and by the fact the SERs are incorporated into the NRC-approved CENPD topical reports. Additionally, PVNGS will use its QA process to verify that the methodologies will be used within the range for which ZIRLO data was acceptable and verified per CENPD-404-P-A. These measures will ensure that PVNGS continues to meet the conditions of the SERs.

The modified FDI<sub>m</sub> is dependent upon the time averaged oxide layer surface temperature, the total irradiation time, and the boiling rate. Although the FDI<sub>m</sub> model has not been reviewed by the NRC staff, the correlation between FDI<sub>m</sub> versus the oxide thickness appears to be in better agreement than burnup versus oxide thickness. FDI<sub>m</sub> is also a useful tool to compare how aggressively the fuel is being burned. PVNGS has committed to restrict the FDI<sub>m</sub> of each ZIRLO clad fuel pin to 110 percent of the maximum fuel pin value previously experienced at PVNGS units. A fraction of the fuel pins in a limited number of assemblies (4-8) will be allowed to attain up to 120 percent of the maximum fuel pin value previously experienced. The licensee has calculated the maximum fuel pin value, which will be the baseline FDI<sub>m</sub>, to be approximately 600. After this value is confirmed in a qualified analysis it will be the baseline value. In its November 9, 2001 submittal, the licensee has made regulatory commitments that would ensure that the baseline FDI<sub>m</sub> remain unchanged during the process of collecting additional data to support increasing the FDI<sub>m</sub> and this restriction on the FDI<sub>m</sub> will be lifted only after consultation with the NRC, if the FDI<sub>m</sub> and measured oxide thickness are found to be conservative or correlate as expected to the model predictions. The results of the measurements used to demonstrate that the oxide thickness is in good agreement with the predicted, will be shared with the NRC. This is acceptable because the FDI<sub>m</sub> will be restricted to a range where the model predictions for oxide buildup should be close to actual buildup based on the limited ZIRLO data used to support CENPD-404-P-A. Additionally, the actual results of measurements will be shared and discussed with the NRC prior to PVNGS lifting the FDI<sub>m</sub> limit.

CENPD-404-P-A was approved by the NRC staff with a burnup limit of 60 GWD/MTU. PVNGS commits to incorporating this limit into their UFSAR. This is acceptable because it will incorporate the burnup limit for ZIRLO clad fuel into the licensing basis of the plant.

CENPD-404-P-A requires the use of specific Westinghouse ECCS performance evaluation models. These include CENPD-132, Supplement 4-P, "Calculative Methods for the CE Nuclear Power Large Break LOCA Evaluation Model," and CENPD-137, Supplement 2-P, "Calculative Methods for the CE Small Break LOCA Evaluation Model." The use of these models are already incorporated into PVNGS TS 5.6.5b with the specific supplement number and date to be added in the COLR document required by TS 5.6.5d. Therefore, PVNGS currently meets this requirement of CENPD-404-P-A.

In its November 9, 2001 submittal, PVNGS has committed to revise Section 4.2 of the UFSAR under the 50.59 process to reflect the manufacturing and implementation of ZIRLO clad fuel. In addition, UFSAR Chapters 6 and 15 will be revised to reflect the re-analysis completed for the use of ZIRLO clad fuel. This is an acceptable process for revising the UFSAR to incorporate the necessary information into the licensing basis.

Based on the above evaluation, the NRC staff finds that the proposed TS changes are consistent with the NRC-approved Topical Report CENPD-404-P-A, and plant-specific conditions satisfy the conditions specified in the NRC staff's safety evaluation associated the approval of the use of Topical Report CENPD-404-P-A. Therefore, the NRC staff concludes

that it is acceptable for PVNGS, Units 1, 2, and 3 to amend TS Section 5.6.5b to add Topical Report CENPD-404-P-A, "Implementation of ZIRLO Cladding Material in CE Nuclear Power Fuel Assembly Designs," to the list of NRC-approved analytical methods used to determine core operating limits for PVNGS.

Because the licensee incorporated the Technical Specification Task Force (TSTF)-363, to list NRC-approved topic reports without the revision number and date in TS 5.6.5b, in Amendment No. 137 for the three units issued October 15, 2001, the licensee does not have to list the complete citation of the NRC-approved topical report in TS 5.6.5b. The topical reports in TS 5.6.5b do not have the revision number and date of issuance; however, by TSTF-363, the licensee would provide the complete citation of the topical report in the COLR document required by TS 5.6.5d. The licensee has stated that it will provide the complete citation of CENPD-404-P-A in the COLR document and would do this during the implementation of the amendment.

### 3.0 STATE CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the Arizona State official was notified of the proposed issuance of the amendments. The State official had no comments.

### 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The amendments change a requirement with respect to installation or use of a facility component located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. The NRC 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 the amendments involve no significant hazards consideration, and there has been no public comment on such finding (67 FR 2919 dated January 22, 2002). 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 or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of the amendments.

### 5.0 CONCLUSION

The Commission 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, (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and (3) the issuance of the amendments will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Principal Contributor: U. Shoop

Date: March 12, 2002