

May 31, 1995

Mr. Kurt M. Haas
Plant Safety and Licensing Director
Palisades Plant
27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway
Covert, MI 49043

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT -
EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF APPENDIX J TO 10
CFR PART 50, PALISADES PLANT (TAC NO. M91858)

Dear Mr. Haas:

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" for the Palisades Plant. The assessment relates to your application for exemption dated March 17, 1995, as supplemented April 26, 1995. The proposed exemption would be a one-time interval exemption for the Type A test (containment integrated leak rate test) from the May 1995 refueling outage to the 1997 refueling outage.

The Assessment is being forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Janet L. Kennedy, Project Manager
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-255

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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Mr. Kurt M. Haas
Consumers Power Company

Palisades Plant

cc:

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONCONSUMERS POWER COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-255PALISADES PLANTENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from Facility Operating License No. DPR-20, issued to Consumers Power Company, (the licensee), for operation of the Palisades Plant located in Van Buren County, Michigan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of the Proposed Action:

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to address potential environmental issues related to the licensee's application of March 17, 1995, as supplemented April 26, 1995. The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Paragraph III.D.1.(a), to the extent that a one-time interval extension for the Type A test (containment integrated leak rate test) by approximately 21 months from the May 1995 refueling outage to the 1997 refueling outage would be granted.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed action is needed to permit the licensee to defer the Type A test from the May 1995 refueling outage to the 1997 refueling outage, thereby saving the cost of performing the test and eliminating the test period from the critical path time of the outage.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed one-time exemption would not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and the proposed one-time exemption would not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents. The licensee has analyzed the results of previous Type A tests performed at the Palisades Plant to show adequate containment performance and will continue to be required to conduct the Type B and C local leak rate tests which historically have been shown to be the principal means of detecting containment leakage paths with the Type A tests confirming the Type B and C test results. It is also noted that the licensee, as a condition of the proposed exemption, would perform the visual containment inspection although it is only required by Appendix J to be conducted in conjunction with Type A tests. The NRC staff considers that these inspections, though limited in scope, provide an important added level of confidence in the continued integrity of the containment boundary. The change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types or amounts of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there

are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed action, the NRC staff considered denial of the proposed action. 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 the Palisades Plant dated June 1972 and its addendum dated February 1978.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on May 4, 1995, the NRC staff consulted with the Michigan State official, Dennis Hahn of the Michigan Department of Public Health, Nuclear Facilities and Environmental Monitoring, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon 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 the licensee's letters dated March 17 and April 26, 1995, 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 Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan 49423.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 31st day of May 1995.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Janet L. Kennedy

Janet L. Kennedy, Project Manager
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation