

October 21, 1988

Dockets Nos. 50-263

Mr. D. M. Musolf, Manager
Nuclear Support Services
Northern States Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Dear Mr. Musolf:

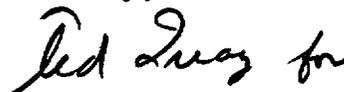
SUBJECT: EXEMPTION FROM APPENDIX J, 10 CFR PART 50, MONTICELLO NUCLEAR
GENERATING PLANT (TAC NO. 69187)

By letter dated August 1, 1988, as supplemented by letter dated August 23, 1988, you requested an exemption from the requirements of Appendix J, 10 CFR Part 50, Section III.A.3, pertaining to the containment integrated leakage rate tests (CILRT) of the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant.

Based on our evaluation of your submittals, we have granted the exemption requested from the CILRT requirements of Appendix J, which specify through incorporation by reference of American National Standard ANSI N45.4-1972, "Leakage Rate Testing of Containment Structures for Nuclear Reactors," that the containment leakage rate calculations be performed using either the Point-to-Point or the Total Time method. This exemption permits you to use the Mass Point method as an acceptable alternative for calculating containment leakage rates. The bases for this action are discussed in the enclosed exemption. This exemption is granted until such provisions of Appendix J are modified.

A copy of the exemption is being filed with the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,



Martin J. Virgilio, Director
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III, IV, V
& Special Projects

Enclosure:
Exemption

cc w/enclosure:

See next page

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DCRUTCHFIELD
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JSTEFANO

OGC
EJORDAN
BGRIMES
TBARNHART (4)
ACRS (10)
GPA/PA
ARM/LFMB
RINGRAM

*See previous concurrence

LA/PD31 PM/PD31 SPLB/NRR
*RINGRAM *STEFANO *JCRAIG
9/02/88 9/06/88 9/08/88

OGC D/PD31
* TQuay
9/16/88 9/29/88

(A)AD:DRSP35 (A)B:DRSP
MVIRGILIO GHOLAHAN
9/13/88 10/17/88

10

DFOL
11

9/29/88



8810260105 881021
PDR ADOCK 05000263
PDC

263
Dockets Nos. 50-~~282~~ and 50-~~306~~

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Nuclear Support Services
Northern States Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Dear Mr. Musolf:

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A copy of the Exemption is being filed with the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Martin J. Virgilio
Martin J. Virgilio, Director
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III, IV, V
& Special Projects

Enclosure:
Exemption

cc w/enclosure:

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OGC
EJORDAN
BGRIMES
TBARNHART (4)
ACRS (10)
GPA/PA
ARM/LFMB
RINGRAM

*No legal objection.
Note modifications.
Done
9/27/88*

LA/PD31	PA/PD31	SP/LB/NRR	OGC	AD/PD31	(A)AD:DRSP35	(A)D:DRSP	
RINGRAM	JSTEFANO	JCRAIG	SH Lewis	new	MVIRGILIO	GHOLAHAN	
9/2/88	9/1/88	9/5/88	9/16/88	9/29/88	9/ /88	9/ /88	9/ /88



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

October 21, 1988

Docket No. 50-263

Mr. D. M. Musolf, Manager
Nuclear Support Services
Northern States Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

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A copy of the exemption is being filed with the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Red Quay for".

Martin J. Virgilio, Director
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III, IV, V
& Special Projects

Enclosure:
Exemption

cc w/enclosure:
See next page

Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant

Mr. D. M. Musolf, Manager
Nuclear Support Services
Northern States Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Gerald Charnoff, Esquire
Shaw, Pittman, Potts and
Trowbridge
2300 N Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20037

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Resident Inspector's Office
Box 1200
Monticello, Minnesota 55362

Plant Manager
Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant
Northern States Power Company
Monticello, Minnesota 55362

Russell J. Hatling
Minnesota Environmental Control
Citizens Association (MECCA)
Energy Task Force
144 Melbourne Avenue, S. E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55113

Dr. John W. Ferman
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3898

Regional Administrator, Region III
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
799 Roosevelt Road
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Commissioner of Health
Minnesota Department of Health
717 Delaware Street, S. E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

O. J. Arlien, Auditor
Wright County Board of
Commissioners
10 NW Second Street
Buffalo, Minnesota 55313

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)	
)	
NORTHERN STATES POWER)	Docket No. 50-263
COMPANY)	
)	
(Monticello Nuclear)	
Generating Plant))	
)	

EXEMPTION

I.

The Northern States Power Company (NSP, the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR-22, which authorizes operation of the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant (Monticello) at a steady-state power level not in excess of 1670 megawatts thermal. The plant is a boiling water reactor located at the licensee's site in Wright County, Minnesota. The license provides, among other things, that Monticello is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

II.

The Code of Federal Regulations, 10 CFR 50.54(o), specifies that primary reactor containments for water-cooled power reactors shall comply with Appendix J, "Primary Reactor Containment Leakage Testing for Water-Cooled Power Reactors." Paragraph III.A.3 of Appendix J incorporates by reference the American National Standard ANSI N45.4-1972, "Leakage Rate Testing of Containment Structures for Nuclear Reactors." This standard requires that containment leakage rate calculations for containment integrated leakage rate

tests (CILRTS) be performed using either the Point-to-Point method or Total Time method.

Further advances in leakage rate testing technology have provided improved test methods, including a newer method of evaluating test data called the Mass Point method. This Mass Point method was incorporated in a newer standard, ANSI/ANS-56.8-1981, "Containment System Leakage Testing Requirements" (revised 1987) and in fact has been accepted by the Commission's staff as an improved alternative method of calculating containment leakage rates. However, a strict interpretation of the specific wording of Appendix J, III.A.3, by referencing only the older ANSI standard, precludes use of the newer improved method, unless the licensees who wish to use this method receive an exemption from the Appendix J requirement of conforming to this provision of ANSI N45.4-1972.

III.

By letter dated August 1, 1988, as supplemented by letter dated August 23, 1988, the licensee requested an exemption from 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Paragraph III.A.3, which requires that all CILRTs be performed in accordance with ANSI N45.4-1972. ANSI N45.4-1972 requires that leakage rate calculations be performed using either the Total Time method or the Point-to-Point method.

The licensee indicated that since the issuance of ANSI N45.4-1972, a more accurate method of determining containment leakage rates, the Mass Point method, has been developed as described in ANSI/ANS-56.8. Therefore, the licensee has requested an exemption to allow the use of the Mass Point method for calculating containment leakage rates.

It has been recognized by the professional community that the Mass Point method is superior to the Point-to-Point and Total Time methods which are referenced in ANSI N45.4-1972 and endorsed by the present regulations. The Mass Point method calculates the air mass at a series of points in time, and plots it against time. A linear regression line is plotted through the mass-time points using a least squares fit. The slope of this line is divided by the intercept of this line, and the result is multiplied by an appropriate constant to obtain the calculated leakage rate.

The superiority of the Mass Point method becomes apparent when it is compared with the two other methods. In the Total Time method, a series of leakage rates are calculated on the basis of containment air mass differences between an initial data point and each individual data point thereafter, and an average of these leakage rates is then determined. If for any reason (e.g., instrument error, lack of temperature equilibrium, ingassing, or outgassing) the initial data point is not accurate, the results of the test will be affected. In the Point-to-Point method, the leak rates are based on the mass difference between each pair of consecutive data points, and these leakage rates are then averaged to yield a single leakage rate estimate. Mathematically, this can be shown to be the difference between the air mass at the beginning of the test and the air mass at the end of the test expressed as a percentage of the containment air mass. It follows from the above that the Point-to-Point method ignores any mass readings taken during the test and thus the leakage rate is calculated on the basis of the difference in mass between two measurements taken at the beginning and at the end of the test, which are 24 hours apart.

On February 29, 1988 (53 FR 5985), the Commission published a proposed amendment to Appendix J to explicitly permit the use of the Mass Point method, subject to certain conditions that have been accepted by the Commission's staff since approximately 1976, as well as to permit the use of the prior methods referenced in ANSI N45.4-1972.

In addition to the method of calculation, consideration of the length of the test should also be included in the overall program. In accordance with Section 7.6 of ANSI N45.4-1972, a test duration of less than 24 hours is only allowed if approved by the Commission, and the only currently approved methodology for such a test is contained in Bechtel Topical Report BN-TOP-1, Revision 1, "Testing Criteria for Integrated Leakage Rate Testing of Primary Containment Structures for Nuclear Power Plants," dated November 1, 1972. This approach only allows use of the Total Time method. Therefore, the Commission conditions the exemption to require a minimum test duration of 24 hours when the Mass Point method is used. By letter dated August 23, 1988, the licensee confirmed that a minimum test duration of 24 hours will be utilized when the Mass Point method is used.

In the August 1, 1988 letter, the licensee also submitted information to identify the special circumstances for granting this exemption for Monticello pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12. The purpose of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50 is to assure that containment leak-tight integrity can be verified periodically throughout the service lifetime in order to maintain containment leakage rate within the limit specified in the facility Technical Specifications. The underlying purpose of the rule, in specifying particular methods for calculating leakage rates, is to assure that accurate and conservative methods are used to assess the results of containment leakage rate tests. The

Commission's staff has determined that the Mass Point method is an acceptable method for calculating containment leakage rates and satisfies the purpose of the rule.

Based on the above discussion, the licensee's proposed exemption from paragraph III.A.3 of Appendix J to allow use of the Mass Point method as requested in the submittal dated August 1, 1988, as revised by letter dated August 23, 1988, is acceptable, until such provision of Appendix J is modified. Thereafter, the licensee shall comply with the provisions of such rule. The exemption applies only to the method of calculating leakage rates (by use of the Mass Point method) and not to any other aspects of the tests.

IV.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(1), that this exemption is authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to the public health and safety, and is consistent with the common defense and security. The Commission has further determined that special circumstances, as set forth in 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), are present justifying the exemption, namely that application of the regulation in the particular circumstances is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule. Accordingly, the Commission hereby grants an exemption as described in Section III above from Paragraph III.A.3 of Appendix J to the extent that the Mass Point method may be used for containment leakage rate calculations, providing it is used with a minimum test duration of 24 hours. The exemption is granted until such provision of Appendix J is modified. Thereafter, the licensee shall comply

with the provisions of such rule. The exemption applies only to the method of calculating leakage rate (using the Mass Point method) and not to any other aspects of the tests.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that granting of this exemption will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (October 4, 1988, 53 FR³⁸⁹⁹⁴).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Gary M. Holahan, Acting Director
Division of Reactor Projects - III
IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Dated at Rockville, Maryland
this 21st day of October 1988.