

June 18, 1987

Docket No. 50-498

Mr. J. H. Goldberg
Group Vice - President, Nuclear
Houston Lighting and Power Company
P. O. Box 1700
Houston, Texas 77001

Dear Mr. Goldberg:

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT -
EXEMPTION FROM APPENDIX J, 10 CFR PART 50, SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT,
UNIT 1

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" for your information. This assessment is related to your letter dated January 15, 1986, in which you requested an exemption from certain requirements related to Appendix J, 10 CFR Part 50. The staff evaluation of this request was published in SER Supplement No. 3.

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

Sincerely,

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Jose A. Calvo, Director
Project Directorate - IV
Division of Project Directorate - III,
IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Environmental Assessment

cc w/enclosure:

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DCrutchfield
6/ /87

Mr. J. H. Goldberg
Houston Lighting and Power Company

South Texas Project

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
HOUSTON LIGHTING AND POWER COMPANY, ET. AL.
SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNIT NO. 1
DOCKET NO. 50-498
NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND
FINDINGS OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an Exemption from a portion of the requirements of Appendix J of 10 CFR Part 50 to the Houston Lighting and Power Company, acting for itself and for the City of San Antonio (acting by and through the City Public Service Board of San Antonio), Central Power and Light Company, and the City of Austin, Texas (the applicants). The Exemption would apply to the South Texas Project (STP) Unit 1 located in Matagorda County, Texas.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action: Section III.D.2(b)(ii) of Appendix J, 10 CFR Part 50, states that "Air locks open during periods when containment integrity is not required by the plant Technical Specifications shall be tested at the end of such periods at not less than P_a ." By letter dated January 15, 1986, the applicant requested that the South Texas Project Unit 1 Technical Specifications be written to instead require an overall air lock leak rate test at P_a (37.5 psig) to be performed only "Upon completion of maintenance which has been performed on the air lock that could affect the air lock sealing capability." Otherwise, if an air lock is opened during periods when containment

integrity is not required and no such maintenance has been performed, a door seal leak rate test (a less time-consuming test) must be performed. This requested exemption is consistent with the staff's position on the acceptable testing frequency necessary to demonstrate air lock sealing capability intended in Appendix J. The staff's current position is shown in the Standard Technical Specifications for Westinghouse Pressurized Water Reactors (NUREG-0452, Rev. 4). Until Commission Rulemaking changes the current requirement in Appendix J, an exemption to the present regulation must be granted before the licensee can adopt the requested Technical Specification.

Need for Proposed Action: The proposed exemption is needed because, based on experience at various plants, the staff found that literal compliance with Section III.D.2(b)(ii) of Appendix J is not necessary to assure containment leaktightness. The requested exemption is in compliance with the staff's technical position and has been granted to many plants. Literal compliance with the regulation would lead to increased costs and occupational exposure.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action: The proposed exemption to 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Section III.D.2(D)(ii) will assure air lock sealing capability and containment integrity; therefore, this exemption will not increase to greater than previously determined, the probability of accidents and post-accident radiological releases, nor otherwise affect radiological plant effluents. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with this proposed exemption.

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Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action: The proposed exemption to 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Section III.D.2(D)(ii) will assure air lock sealing capability and containment integrity; therefore, this exemption will not increase to greater than previously determined, the probability of accidents and post-accident radiological releases, nor otherwise affect radiological plant effluents. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with this proposed exemption.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed exemption involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They would not affect non-radiological plant effluents and would have no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Alternatives to the Proposed Actions: The principal alternative to the proposed actions would be to deny the requested exemptions. This would result in increased costs and occupational exposure.

Alternative Use Of Resources: This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement (NUREG-1171) for STP, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Contacted: The NRC staff reviewed the applicants' request and applicable documents referenced therein that support this Exemption for STP, Units 1 and 2. The NRC did not consult other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for this action. Based upon the environmental assessment, we conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For details with respect to this action, see the request for exemption dated January 15, 1986. This document, utilized in the NRC staff's technical evaluation of the exemption request, is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., and

at the Wharton County Junior College, J. M. Hodges Learning Center, 911 Boling Highway, Wharton, Texas 77488. The staff's technical evaluation of the request was published in SER Supplement No. 3 and is available for inspection at both locations listed above.

Dated at Bethesda, Maryland, this 18th day of June .

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Frank Schroeder, Acting Director
Division of Reactor Projects - III, IV,
V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation