

February 8, 1989

Docket No: 50-498

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

Dear Mr. Goldberg:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT TO FACILITY
OPERATING LICENSE AND PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING -
SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNIT 1

Enclosed is a copy of the subject notice which relates to your application for amendment dated January 25, 1989 to revise the South Texas Project, Unit 1 license (NPF-76). The proposed amendment would change the technical specifications by modifying the Fuel Handling Building Exhaust Air Subsystem electric heaters to operate at 38 kW instead of the current 50 kW; modifying the Source Range Neutron Monitor calibration requirements to ensure that a new model of preamplifier can be installed for use in the Source Range Neutron Monitoring instrumentation circuit; and clarifying action statements for the Chemical Detection System and the Control Room Ventilation System.

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

Sincerely,
/s/
George F. Dick, Jr., Project Manager
Project Directorate - IV
Division of Reactor Projects - III,
IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/enclosure:
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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

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IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/enclosure:
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Houston Lighting and Power Company

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UNITED STATES REGULATORY COMMISSIONHOUSTON LIGHTING & POWER COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-498NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE AND PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF-76, issued to Houston Lighting & Power Company (the licensee), for operation of the South Texas Project, Unit 1, located in Matagorda County, Texas.

The proposed amendment would modify the Technical Specifications (TS) by modifying the Fuel Handling Building Exhaust Air subsystem electric heaters to operate at 38 kW instead of the current 50 kW; modifying the Source Range Neutron Monitor calibration requirements to ensure that a new model of preamplifier can be installed for use; and clarifying action statements for the Chemical Detection System and the Control Room Ventilation System.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the request for amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated, or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated, or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The three modifications are discussed below.

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The Fuel Handling Building (FHB) Exhaust Air Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System exhausts air from inside the FHB to the plant main vent stack. The system consists of two 100% capacity exhaust filter trains, three 50% capacity exhaust booster fans, three 50% capacity main exhaust fans, dampers and instrumentation. Each exhaust filter train consists of three 33 1/3% capacity filter units which has an electric heating element, prefilters, HEPA filters, and a carbon filter. The electric heating element decreases humidity which affects the efficiency of the removal of iodine. A flowswitch turns off the electric heaters if airflow drops below a minimum flowrate. When all three trains are actuated, the flow through the filter units is less than the setpoint, thus deenergizing the heater.

Currently, procedures require operators to shut down one filter train following an Engineered Safety Feature Actuation System (ESFAS) actuation in order to maintain sufficient flow through the other train such that the heaters will operate. The proposed change would reduce the size of the heaters thus allowing the heaters to operate at a lower flowrate while maintaining the 70% or below relative humidity criteria.

The determination of significant hazards is discussed below.

- (1) The proposed change to the heaters reflects design requirements to mitigate the consequences of an accident. The air flow is maintained at the present value. Additionally, dose analysis assumptions are maintained using the lower rated heaters. Therefore, there is no increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.
- (2) The proposed heaters fulfill design basis requirements as part of an accident mitigating system described in the FSAR. A

change in the heater capacity does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident.

- (3) The proposed change reflects a design change which maintains the relative humidity at a level consistent with iodine removal requirements. There is no reduction in the margin of safety.

Prior to issuance of the Unit 2 license, the licensee had to replace the preamplifier for one of the Source Range Neutron Detectors. A new model, "low noise", preamplifier was used as the replacement in Unit 2 because the previous model is no longer manufactured. As a result of the use of the new model of preamplifier, the channel calibration surveillance for the source range detector had to be modified for the Unit 2 TS to address the use of the new model of preamplifier. The proposed change would allow the use of the new model preamplifier in Unit 1.

The determination of significant hazards is discussed below.

- (1) The proposed change involves calibration techniques on the new preamplifier which will ensure the source range detector will function as required. There is no increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.
- (2) The proposed changes to the calibration requirements will ensure the preamplifier will function as well as the current preamplifier if used in Unit 1. No conditions have been created that could cause a new or different kind of accident.
- (3) The proposed changes will ensure the source range detector operates as required which is at least equal to the performance with the old model preamplifier.

The Control Room HVAC System has two emergency modes of operation: (1) toxic gas release, (2) radiological release. The Chemical Detection System has an action statement in the TS which requires the Control Room HVAC System be in the recirculation mode if one or both of the detectors are inoperable. The Control Room HVAC System has action statements in modes 5 and 6 (cold shutdown and refueling) which require the system be placed in the filtered recirculation and make-up modes if any of the three trains are inoperable. Additionally, the ESFAS action statements for modes 5 and 6 would eventually require the Control Room HVAC System be placed in the filtered recirculation and make-up modes.

The action statement that applies to the Control Room HVAC System for modes 5 and 6 requires that if one train is inoperable, the remaining train be placed in the filtered recirculation and make-up modes. Thus, if the Control Room HVAC System is in the recirculation and make-up status, failure of one of the toxic gas detectors would require an action which conflicts with one that is already in effect.

The proposed change would add a note to TS 3.3.3.7 (Control Room Ventilation System) that if there is a conflict between the operable mode required by several action statements, then the system is to be placed in filtered recirculation only. This would be considered the safe default condition.

The determination of significant hazards is discussed below.

- (1) The proposed changes maintain the plant in the safest possible condition given the postulated situation. The proposed change will not increase the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

- (2) The proposed change only affects actions to be taken as a result of plant conditions in order to maintain control room habitability. It will not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident.
- (3) The proposed change maintains the margin of safety for a toxic gas release by placing the Control Room HVAC System in the filtered recirculation mode.

During a radiological release, the positive pressure of the control room and short period of time of in-leakage would not result in a significant dose to the operators. Further, the make-up mode could be actuated if needed. Therefore, the proposed change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Based on the above, the staff has determined that the proposed changes involve a no significant hazards consideration. The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination. The Commission will not normally make a final determination unless it receives a request for a hearing.

Comments should be addressed to the Regulatory Publications Branch, Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services, Office of Administration and Resource Management, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, and should cite the publication date and page number of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room P-216, Phillips Building, 7920 Norfolk Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland, from 8:15 am to 4:00 pm. Copies of written comments may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20555. The filings of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By March 16, 1989 , the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license, and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written petition for leave to intervene. Request for a hearing and petitions for leave to intervene must be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel will rule on the request and/or petition, and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene must set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) the nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as to which the petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to fifteen (15)

days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than fifteen (15) days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, the petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter, and the bases for each contention set forth with reasonable specificity. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the request for amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for

example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and state comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish a notice of issuance and provide for opportunity for a hearing after issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington D.C., by the above date. Where petitions are filed during the last ten (10) days of the notice period, it is requested that the petitioner promptly so inform the Commission by a toll-free telephone call to Western Union at (800) 325-6000 (in Missouri (800) 342-6700). The Western Union operator should be given Datagram Identification Number 3737 and the following message addressed to Jose A. Calvo: petitioner's name and telephone number; date petition was mailed; plant name; and publication date and page number of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel-Rockville, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, and to Jack R. Newman, Esq., Newman & Holtzinger, P.C., 1615 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, that the request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714 (a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated January 25, 1989, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20555, and at the Wharton Junior College Library, J.M. Hodges Learning Center, 911 Boling Highway, Wharton, Texas 77488 and the Austin Public Library, 810 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 8th day of February, 1989.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Jose A. Calvo

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