

August 19, 1997

Mr. William T. Cottle
Executive Vice-President &
General Manager, Nuclear
Houston Lighting & Power Company
South Texas Project Electric
Generating Station
P. O. Box 289
Wadsworth, TX 77483

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS - SOUTH TEXAS
PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M99406 AND M99407)

Dear Mr. Cottle:

The Commission has requested the Office of the Federal Register to publish the enclosed "Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing." This notice relates to your application for amendments dated August 14, 1997, which would revise the allowed tolerance of the reactor coolant system volume provided in Technical Specification 5.4.2 to account for steam generator tube plugging.

If you have any questions regarding the enclosed notice, please call me at 301-415-1326.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY: J. Kennedy for
Thomas W. Alexion, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure: Notice

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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Executive Vice-President &
General Manager, Nuclear
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Sincerely,

Janet Kennedy for

Thomas W. Alexion, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure: Notice

cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. William T. Cottle
Houston Lighting & Power Company

South Texas, Units 1 & 2

cc:

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Matagorda County Courthouse
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Bay City, TX 77414

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

HOUSTON LIGHTING & POWER COMPANY

CITY PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD OF SAN ANTONIO

CENTRAL POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

DOCKET NOS. 50-498 AND 50-499

NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE, PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-76 and NPF-80 issued to Houston Lighting & Power Company, et. al., (the licensee) for operation of the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2, located in Matagorda County, Texas.

The proposed amendment would revise the allowed tolerance of the reactor coolant system volume provided in Technical Specification 5.4.2 to account for steam generator tube plugging.

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 amendment request 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. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.91, this analysis provides a determination that the proposed change to the Technical Specifications described previously does not involve any significant hazards consideration as defined in 10 CFR 50.92.

1. The proposed change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed change increases the range given in the Technical Specifications allowed for total water and steam volume of the Reactor Coolant System. Increasing the range to incorporate volume reduction caused by plugging 10% of steam generator tubes has been reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission with the exception of the uncontrolled dilution event. This event is addressed in South Texas Project Updated Final Safety Analysis Report Section 15.4.6. Plugging of steam generator tubes and the resulting reduction in Reactor Coolant System volume are not precursors to occurrence of an uncontrolled boron dilution event.

Reduced Reactor Coolant System volume results in less time available to an operator to respond to an uncontrolled boron dilution event; however, uncontrolled boron dilution event analyses assuming 10% tube plugging continue to demonstrate that there is adequate time (at least 15 minutes) prior to loss of shutdown margin for the operator to manually terminate the source of the dilution flow in the full power, start-up, hot standby, hot shutdown, and cold shutdown (with the Reactor Coolant System filled) modes of operation. An uncontrolled boron dilution event is precluded by administrative controls during refueling or during cold shutdown with the Reactor Coolant System not filled. Procedures and design features continue to ensure proper and timely response to an uncontrolled dilution event.

Based on the continued ability to respond to an uncontrolled boron dilution event in accordance with design, this change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. The proposed change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The proposed change revises the allowed range of the total water and steam volume of the Reactor coolant System as stated in the Technical Specifications; this change has been reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission with the exception of uncontrolled boron dilution events as addressed in Section 15.4.6 of the South Texas Project Updated Final Safety Analysis Report. The proposed change does not modify or remove any plant design requirement, or require installation of any new or different kind of equipment. The change also does not involve any significantly new or different mode of operation of the plant.

There are no new or different kinds of accidents created as a result of this change.

3. The proposed change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Reduction in reactor coolant system volume associated with 10% plugging of steam generator tubes has been reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission with the exception of uncontrolled boron dilution events as described in Updated Final Safety Analysis Report section 15.4.6. The reduction in Reactor Coolant System volume associated with steam generator tube plugging has an adverse effect on the uncontrolled boron dilution event transient in that less time is available for operator action to correct the situation. However, assumptions for active reactor coolant system volumes that include one or more steam generators have been adjusted to reflect 10% steam generator tube plugging for design basis analyses. Uncontrolled boron dilution event analyses demonstrate that, with 10% steam generator tube plugging, there continues to be adequate time (at least 15 minutes) for operator action to terminate dilution flow prior to loss of shutdown margin. Therefore, the margin of safety is not significantly reduced by this change.

Conclusion

Based on the information presented above, the proposed change does not involve a significant hazards consideration and will not have a significant effect on the safe operation of the plant as previously analyzed. Therefore, there is reasonable assurance that operation of the South Texas Project in accordance with the proposed revised Technical Specification will not endanger the public health and safety.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves 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.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period 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 in the FEDERAL REGISTER 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.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch, Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D22, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of

written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By September 25, 1997, 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 request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714 which is available 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 Wharton County Junior College, J. M. Hodges Learning Center, 911 Boling Highway, Wharton, TX. 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, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the 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 shall 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 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 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 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 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a 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. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. Petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a

genuine dispute exists with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. 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 amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

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, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public


Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and to Jack R. Newman, Esq., Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, 1800 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-5869, 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 petition and/or 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 August 14, 1997, which is 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 Wharton County Junior College, J. M. Hodges Learning Center, 911 Boling Highway, Wharton, TX.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 19th day of August 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION


James W. Clifford, Acting Director
Project Directorate IV/1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation