

April 27, 1999

Mr. William T. Cottle
President and Chief Executive Officer
STP Nuclear Operating Company
South Texas Project Electric
Generating Station
P. O. Box 289
Wadsworth, TX 77483

SUBJECT: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2 - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT RE: EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR
50.60 REQUIREMENTS (TAC NOS. MA5065 AND MA5066)

Dear Mr. Cottle:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for exemption dated March 18, 1999. The application requested an exemption from certain requirements of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 50.60, "Acceptance Criteria for Fracture Prevention Measures for Lightwater Nuclear Power Reactors for Normal Operation." This section requires all power reactors to meet the fracture toughness and material surveillance program requirements for the reactor coolant pressure boundary set forth in Appendices G and H to 10 CFR Part 50.

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

Sincerely,

Original signed by:
Thomas W. Alexion, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas W. Alexion". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Thomas W. Alexion, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. William T. Cottle
STP Nuclear Operating Company

South Texas, Units 1 & 2

cc:

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

STP NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY

DOCKET NOS. 50-498 AND 50-499

SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from Facility Operating License No. NPF-76 and Facility Operating License No. NPF-80, issued to STP Nuclear Operating Company (the licensee), for operation of the South Texas Project (STP), Units 1 and 2, located in Matagorda County, Texas.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would exempt STP Nuclear Operating Company from the requirements of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 50.60, which requires all power reactors to meet the fracture toughness and material surveillance program requirements for the reactor coolant pressure boundary set forth in Appendices G and H to 10 CFR Part 50. The proposed exemption would allow STP Nuclear Operating Company to apply American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Code Case N-514 for determining STP's cold overpressurization mitigation system (COMS) pressure setpoint.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated March 18, 1999.

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The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed exemption is needed to support an amendment to the STP Technical Specifications which will revise the heatup, cooldown, and COMS curves. The use of ASME Code Case N-514 would allow an increased operating band for system makeup and pressure control.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (i.e., the "no-action" alternative). 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 Related to the Operation of South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2," dated August 1996, in NUREG-1171.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on March 30, 1999, the staff consulted with Texas State Official, Mr. Arthur C. Tate of the Texas Department of Health regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of 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 letter dated March 18, 1999, 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, Texas.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 27th day of April 1999.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Robert A. Gramm, Chief, Section 1
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation