

November 9, 1995

Mr. Guy R. Horn
Vice President - Nuclear
Nebraska Public Power District
P. O. Box 499
Columbus, NE 68602-0499

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT -
EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR 55.59 - COOPER NUCLEAR STATION
(TAC NO. M93829)

Dear Mr. Horn:

Enclosed is a copy of the "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" related to the exemption requested by the Nebraska Public Power District for the Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) in a letter from John H. Mueller, Site Manager, dated October 16, 1995. That letter requested a one-time exemption from the two-year scheduler requirement of 10 CFR 55.59, to allow the licensed operator requalification examinations for CNS to be rescheduled after the current refueling outage. The requested exemption would extend the completion date for the examinations from December 22, 1995, until March 15, 1996.

The Commission concludes that this proposed exemption would result in no significant radiological and non-radiological environmental impacts, including potential accidents, and could also result in a reduction in overall shutdown risk at the Cooper Nuclear Station. The assessment is being forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,
Original Signed By:

James R. Hall, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Number 50-298

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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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Hall".

James R. Hall, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Number 50-298

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cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. Guy R. Horn
Nebraska Public Power Company

Cooper Nuclear Station

cc:

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONNEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICTDOCKET NO. 50-298COOPER NUCLEAR STATIONENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering the issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations to Facility Operating License Number DPR-46. This license was issued to the Nebraska Public Power District (the licensee) for operation of the Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) located in Nemaha County, Nebraska.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed exemption would allow the licensee to reschedule the licensed operator requalification examinations at CNS until after the current refueling outage. The requested exemption would extend the completion date for the examinations from December 22, 1995, until March 15, 1996. In the letter, the licensee indicated that licensed operators will continue to participate in the ongoing requalification training program, and that by assigning licensed operators to the outage organization, a reduction in overall shutdown risk could be realized.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated October 16, 1995, for an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.59.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The schedular exemption requested would extend the completion date for the

administration of licensed operator examinations for the CNS requalification program from December 22, 1995, to March 15, 1996. This would move the examination period outside the current refueling outage, thereby allowing the assignment of licensed operators to refueling outage organization positions. The increased oversight of outage activities provided by the licensed operators would result in better shutdown risk management and provide a net benefit with regard to plant safety.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the licensee's request. The proposed exemption does not change the requirements for licensed operator training, as licensed operators at CNS will continue to participate in the ongoing requalification training program throughout the extension period. The affected licensed operators will continue to demonstrate and possess the required levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to safely operate the plant. The proposed exemption would not change the existing CNS safety limits, safety settings, power operations, or effluent limits. The proposed exemption would allow increased oversight by licensed operators of outage activities with a resulting net benefit to safety.

The change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does

involve features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

Since the Commission has concluded that there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the requested exemption. 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, but the proposed action could also result in a reduction in overall shutdown risk at CNS.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Cooper Nuclear Station dated February 1973.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on November 3, 1995, the staff consulted with the Nebraska State official, Ms. Cheryl Rogers, Nebraska Department of Health, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

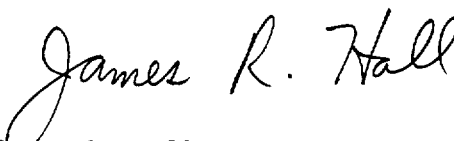
Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that

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 this action, see the licensee's request for an exemption dated October 16, 1995, 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 Auburn Public Library, 118 15th Street, Auburn, Nebraska 68305.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of November, 1995.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Hall". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

James R. Hall, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-1
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation