

July 18, 2002

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 - ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS
ON EQUIPMENT HATCH OPEN DURING REFUEL OPERATIONS
(TAC NOS. MB3587 AND MB3591)

Dear Mr. Cottle:

The Commission has issued the enclosed Amendment No. 139 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-76 and Amendment No. 128 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-80 for the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2, respectively. The amendments consist of changes to the Technical Specifications (TSs) in response to your application dated October 22, 2001, as supplemented by letters dated May 16 and June 25, 2002.

The amendments change TS 3/4.9.4, "Refueling Operations - Containment Building Penetrations," to allow the equipment hatch to be open during CORE ALTERATIONS or movement of irradiated fuel within the containment.

A copy of our related Safety Evaluation is also enclosed. The Notice of Issuance will be included in the Commission's next biweekly *Federal Register* notice.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Mohan C. Thadani, Senior Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate IV
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosures: 1. Amendment No. 139 to NPF-76
2. Amendment No. 128 to NPF-80
3. Safety Evaluation

cc w/encls: See next page

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ACCESSION NO: ML021430328

*See previous concurrence

**With comments

OFFICE	PDV-1/PM	PDIV-1/PM	PDIV-1/LA	SPLB/BC**	OGC	PDIV-1/SC
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DATE	7/18/02	6/11/02	7/3/02	6/18/2002	7/15/02	7/16/02

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STP NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY

DOCKET NO. 50-498

SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNIT 1

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 139
License No. NPF-76

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
 - A. The application for amendment by STP Nuclear Operating Company* acting on behalf of itself and for Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P), the City Public Service Board of San Antonio (CPS), Central Power and Light Company (CPL), and the City of Austin, Texas (COA) (the licensees), dated October 22, 2001, as supplemented by letters dated May 16 and June 25, 2002, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;
 - B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, as amended, the provisions of the Act, and the rules and regulations of the Commission;
 - C. There is reasonable assurance (i) that the activities authorized by this amendment can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public, and (ii) that such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations;
 - D. The issuance of this license amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public; and
 - E. The issuance of this amendment is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51 of the Commission's regulations and all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

*STP Nuclear Operating Company is authorized to act for Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P), the City Public Service Board of San Antonio, Central Power and Light Company, and the City of Austin, Texas, and has exclusive responsibility and control over the physical construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility.

2. Accordingly, the license is amended by changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment and Paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. NPF-76 is hereby amended to read as follows:

2. Technical Specifications

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 139, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated in the license. The licensee shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

3. The license amendment is effective as of its date of issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days from the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA by William Reckley for/

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

Attachment: Changes to the Technical
Specifications

Date of Issuance: July 18, 2002

STP NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY

DOCKET NO. 50-499

SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNIT 2

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 128
License No. NPF-80

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
 - A. The application for amendment by STP Nuclear Operating Company* acting on behalf of itself and for Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P), the City Public Service Board of San Antonio (CPS), Central Power and Light Company (CPL), and the City of Austin, Texas (COA) (the licensees), dated October 22, 2001, as supplemented by letters dated May 16 and June 25, 2002, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;
 - B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, as amended, the provisions of the Act, and the rules and regulations of the Commission;
 - C. There is reasonable assurance (i) that the activities authorized by this amendment can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public, and (ii) that such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations;
 - D. The issuance of this license amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public; and
 - E. The issuance of this amendment is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51 of the Commission's regulations and all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

*STP Nuclear Operating Company is authorized to act for Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P), the City Public Service Board of San Antonio, Central Power and Light Company, and the City of Austin, Texas, and has exclusive responsibility and control over the physical construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility.

2. Accordingly, the license is amended by changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment and Paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. NPF-80 is hereby amended to read as follows:

2. Technical Specifications

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 128, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated in the license. The licensee shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

3. The license amendment is effective as of its date of issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days from the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA by William Reckley for/

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

Attachment: Changes to the Technical
Specifications

Date of Issuance: July 18, 2002

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NOS. 139 AND 128

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NOS. NPF-76 AND NPF-80

DOCKET NOS. 50-498 AND 50-499

Replace the following page of the Appendix A Technical Specifications with the attached revised page. The revised page is identified by amendment number and contain marginal lines indicating the areas of change.

REMOVE

3/4 9-4

INSERT

3/4 9-4

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
RELATED TO AMENDMENT NOS. 139 AND 128 TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NOS. NPF-76 AND NPF-80
STP NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY, ET AL.
SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2
DOCKET NOS. 50-498 AND 50-499

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By application dated October 22, 2001, as supplemented by letters dated May 16 and June 25, 2002, South Texas Project (STP) Nuclear Operating Company (the licensee) requested changes to the STP, Units 1 and 2, Technical Specifications (TSs). The proposed changes would change TS 3/4.9.4, "Refueling Operations - Containment Building Penetrations," to allow the equipment hatch to be open during CORE ALTERATIONS or movement of irradiated fuel within the containment.

The supplemental letters dated May 16 and June 25, 2002, provided additional information that clarified the application, did not expand the scope of the application as originally noticed, and did not change the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's original proposed no significant hazards consideration determination as published in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 2002 (67 FR 2930).

2.0 DISCUSSION

The licensee has proposed changes to TS 3/4.9.4 to allow the equipment hatch to be open during core alterations or movement of irradiated fuel assemblies inside containment and to verify that the capability to close the hatch, if this is needed, is in place. This allowance would be used during refueling operations when the reactor is shut down, and there is at least 23 feet of water above the reactor flange in accordance with TS 3.9.10, "Water Level - Refueling Cavity."

The STP, Unit 1 and 2 equipment hatch is described in the STP Updated Final Safety Analysis Report Section 3.8.2.1.1.

The equipment hatch consists of a removable flanged head, matching body ring, swing bolts, and seals. The body ring has a 24-ft inside diameter and is stiffened on its exterior surface by a welding collar, designed for attachment by welding to a thickened insert plate in the RCB [Reactor Containment Building] liner. The body ring is anchored into the concrete Containment wall.

The swing bolts are provided and installed on the body ring. These are to be used with matching brackets on the head to draw the head tight and to provide an effective seal. Two concentric grooves are machined in the flanged head to accept two separate O-ring seals.

The head is flanged to match the body ring and is of a dished shape that is convex to the pressure. Brackets for accepting the body ring swing bolts are provided on the outside diameter of the flange. A test connection is provided between the two concentric seal grooves in the head for shop leak-testing between the two O-ring seals and for future field testing.

The dished head is fully removable by a vertical lifting device. The head runs in guides throughout the extent of its vertical movement. The guides are securely fixed through the liner plates at sufficient positions to ensure the rigidity of the assembly. A locking device on each guide is provided to support the head in its raised position.

Because the equipment hatch is part of the containment pressure boundary, the TSs require that the equipment hatch be closed and held in place by bolts when (1) the containment must be closed and operable (this is in reactor Modes 1 through 4 in accordance with TS 3.6.1, "Primary Containment - Containment Integrity"), and (2) there are core alterations or irradiated fuel movement in Mode 6 (this is in accordance with TS 3.9.4). The TS 3.9.4 requirement is to ensure that a release of radioactive material within the containment, because of fuel movements or core alterations, would be collected and filtered before being released from the containment to the environment.

The licensee explained that the proposed changes to TS 3.9.4 would, "... permit the optimization of outages to achieve an overall risk reduction while also reducing outage time and cost. A significant contributor to this risk reduction is the ability to postpone operations early in the outage that, from a practical standpoint to achieve a short outage time, must be performed soon after shutdown when there is no TS requirement for a closed containment. The proposed changes will allow some of these operations to be accomplished later, when the reactor vessel is open and covered by 23 feet of water and the risk of a severe core damage accident is very low."

The postulated accidents that could result in a release of radioactive material through the equipment hatch would be as follows: (1) a fuel handling accident (FHA) inside containment, and (2) a loss of cooling to the core that leads to core boiling and uncover. These are discussed in Section 3.3 below.

3.0 EVALUATION

By proposing to allow the equipment hatch to be open during core alterations or movement of irradiated fuel, the licensee would essentially be, temporarily, eliminating the function of the reactor containment. Evolving conditions, such as severe weather, accidents, or equipment malfunctions would require the reestablishment of the reactor containment function in a timely and effective manner. Accordingly, the NRC staff reviewed the licensee's proposal to assure that proper administrative controls will be provided to assure that containment integrity can be reestablished as needed within 2 hours, and that internal and external hazards are not

significant. Finally, the NRC staff reviewed the licensee's proposed changes to the TS to assure that proper restrictions and surveillance requirements (SRs) are provided.

3.1 Administrative Controls

If the licensee would open the equipment hatch in outages when there are core alterations or fuel movement inside containment, the licensee has proposed to have the equipment hatch under administrative controls. If open, the equipment hatch would be maintained in a condition capable of being closed and bolted within 2 hours and there would be procedures in place that would require the following:

- Appropriate personnel are aware of the open status of the containment (i.e., an open equipment hatch) during movement of irradiated fuel or core alterations.
- Specified individuals are designated and readily available to close the equipment hatch following an evacuation that would occur in the event of an FHA.
- Any obstructions (e.g., cables and hoses) that would prevent rapid closure of an open equipment hatch can be quickly removed.

A description of the administrative controls is given in the licensee's application and are described in the TSs Bases, provided with the application and designated as "Information Only." The licensee has provided a commitment in their October 22, 2001, application to establish these administrative controls prior to implementation of the proposed TS and within 30 days of the date of this Safety Evaluation (SE).

In its supplemental letter of May 16, 2002, the licensee stated that it demonstrated the closure of the equipment hatch in October 1999 and found that closure could be achieved, and the equipment hatch secured with four bolts, in 18 minutes. The licensee, however, indicated that this time may be conservatively assumed to be extended to 2 hours to add the time required to assemble and brief the required work crew.

As indicated in the October 22, 2001, application, installation of the equipment hatch requires the use of two, dedicated electric hoists. In the event of loss-of-offsite power, a dedicated diesel generator will automatically start and load the appropriate load center to supply back-up power to the equipment hatch hoists.

3.2 Tornado Missiles

In its supplemental letter dated May 16, 2002, the licensee stated that the equipment hatch (inner cover) does not provide missile protection for the containment; this protection is provided by the equipment hatch missile shield which is located outside the containment. During Modes 1 through 4, when containment integrity is required, the missile shield covers the equipment hatch. For Modes 5 and 6, the licensee stated that the missile shield is not required because there are no essential targets between the equipment hatch and the inner missile barrier inside containment. The equipment hatch and its missile shield would not have to be put in place for a tornado in Modes 5 and 6. Should a tornado missile come through the equipment hatch opening in Modes 5 and 6, the licensee stated that there would be no damage to systems

or components required to maintain the reactor in a safe shutdown condition, and the fuel and fuel handling equipment are protected from tornado missiles at all times.

In addressing what will happen at the site during refueling with severe weather, the licensee stated that procedures are in place ("Natural or Destructive Phenomena Guidelines," OPOP04-0002) to suspend all core alterations if tornado warnings are in effect for the STP site. The equipment hatch would be reinstalled when a tornado watch is issued for the STP site. The procedure uses the National Weather Service definitions of watches and warnings.

3.3 Postulated Accidents

The limiting event during refueling when there are core alterations or fuel handling inside containment is the FHA inside containment. The licensee and the NRC staff addressed the issue of the FHA in connection with Amendments 69 and 58, to the Facility Operating Licenses for STP, Units 1 and 2, respectively, in a SE dated February 9, 1995. The February 9, 1995, SE approved changes to the TS to permit both personnel access lock (PAL) doors to be open while moving fuel during refueling operations.

The NRC staff performed calculations, described in the February 9, 1995 SE, to determine offsite doses and doses to control room operators, resulting from the FHA with the PALs open. These calculations assumed an instantaneous puff release of noble gases and radioiodines, from the gap and plenum of the broken fuel rods, as gas bubbles that pass through 23 feet of water covering the fuel and exhausted to the environment within 2 hours. The results of these calculations were provided in the February 9, 1995, SE and are shown, herein in Table 1. The NRC staff concluded in the February 9, 1995, SE that, "The computed offsite doses and control room operator doses are well within the acceptance criteria given in SRP [Standard Review Plan] 15.7.4 and GDC [General Design Criteria of Appendix A to 10 CFR Part 50] 19."

The offsite doses and doses to control room operators, resulting from the STP, design basis, FHA with the equipment hatch and/or the PALs open, are the same as that with the PALs, alone, open¹. The STP design basis FHA does not take credit for the containment building barriers and no credit is taken for removal of any iodine by the atmosphere filtration system filter. With regard to the dilution volume, the normal containment purge is assumed to be in service, and air flow would be in through the open containment (open equipment hatch and/or open PALs), across the south end of the reactor cavity and into the purge exhaust intake. This is the same scenario as analyzed for Amendments 69 and 58. The release from the FHA would be into the subject volume and then into the purge exhaust intake until the purge is secured on high radiation; thereafter airflow would be out of the volume and is assumed to be released to the environment within 2 hours. Thus, the NRC staff concludes that the open equipment hatch will not change the offsite doses and doses to control room operators², resulting from the STP, design basis, FHA.

¹STP Final Safety Analysis Report Section 15.7.4.2.2 specifically addresses the FHA inside containment with the PALs open.

²Doses to control room operators resulting from the FHA are bounded by the design basis accident (the postulated loss-of-coolant accident) per STP Final Safety Analysis Report Section 6.4.4.1.

For the case of a loss of cooling to the core, the licensee has stated in the May 16, 2002, supplement, that the conservatively-assumed 2 hours required to close the open equipment hatch is shorter than the time for the core to start boiling. The licensee stated that the minimum time to core boiling is 4.5 hours (at 165 hours after shutdown), assuming an initial temperature of 140° F. The time to core boiling for reduced water inventory in mid-loop operation in a refueling outage is not applicable to this review because TS 3.9.10 requires at least 23 feet of water above the top of the reactor vessel flange during movement of irradiated fuel assemblies within containment; therefore, the proposed amendment does not apply to mid-loop operations.

3.4 Proposed TS Changes

The licensee has proposed a change to TS 3.9.4a to allow the equipment hatch, previously referred to as the equipment door, to be open, during CORE ALTERATIONS or movement of irradiated fuel within containment, provide that: "1) The Reactor has been subcritical for \geq 165 hours, AND 2) If open, the equipment hatch is capable of being closed." Based on the administrative controls described in the licensee's application; the demonstration that the equipment hatch can be closed within 2 hours in the case of an accident or malfunction inside containment; the potential consequences of the design basis FHA inside containment (including the doses to control room operators) meet the dose guidelines of 10 CFR Part 100 and General Design Criterion 19 ; and the protection of equipment needed to keep the plant safely shut down from tornado missiles during refueling with the equipment hatch open; the NRC staff concludes that the proposed change to TS 3.9.4a is acceptable.

The licensee has proposed a clarification to TS 3.9.4c in that the words "each penetration" would be replaced by the words "all other penetrations." The requirements of TS 3.9.4a and TS 3.9.4b relate to the containment penetrations identified as the equipment hatch and air locks, respectively. The requirements of TS 3.9.4c relate to all other containment penetrations. The proposed change to TS 3.9.4c properly relates the TS requirements to the associated equipment and is acceptable.

The licensee has proposed a change to TS 4.9.4 which provides SRs for containment penetrations during refueling operations. The licensee has proposed deletion of the words "by an OPERABLE automatic containment purge and exhaust isolation valve" and adding the words "as required by specification 3.9.4...(as applicable)." As noted above the requirements of TS 3.9.4 relate to the equipment hatch, air locks, and "all other penetrations." The proposed change to TS 4.9.4 expands the SRs for containment penetrations, beyond those isolated "by an OPERABLE automatic purge and exhaust isolation valve" to include all penetrations subject to TS 3.9.4. Accordingly, the proposed change to TS 4.9.4 is acceptable.

Finally, the licensee proposed to add TS 4.9.4c to the TSs to assure that, every 7 days during CORE ALTERATION, the licensee verifies that "Proper tools are staged and trained personnel are designated to close the equipment hatch, if open." The proposed surveillance only needs to be conducted when the equipment hatch is open. The proposed surveillance, together with the administrative requirements addressed in Section 2.1, herein, assures that the equipment hatch can be promptly closed in the event of an accident, equipment failure, or severe weather. Accordingly, the proposed change to TS 4.9.4, which would add a SR for the equipment hatch, to be performed every 7 days during CORE ALTERATION, when the equipment hatch is open, is acceptable.

4.0 STATE CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the Texas State official was notified of the proposed issuance of the amendments. The State official had no comments.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The amendments change a requirement with respect to installation or use of a facility component located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20 and changes SRs. The NRC staff has determined that the amendments involve no significant increase in the amounts, and no significant change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite, and that there is no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. The Commission has previously issued a proposed finding that the amendments involve no significant hazards consideration, and there has been no public comment on such finding (67 FR 2930 dated January 22, 2002). The amendments also relate to changes in recordkeeping, reporting, or administrative procedures or requirements. Accordingly, the amendments meet the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9) and 10 CFR 51.22(c)(10). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of the amendments.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Commission has concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and (3) the issuance of the amendments will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Attachment: Table 1, NRC Staff-Calculated Radiological Dose Consequences (Rem)

Principal Contributor: D. H. Jaffe

Date: July 18, 2002

TABLE 1

NRC STAFF-CALCULATED RADIOLOGICAL DOSE CONSEQUENCES (REM)

<u>Exclusion Area Boundary</u>	<u>NRC Staff- Calculated Doses</u>	<u>NRC Acceptance Criteria SRP 15.7.4 Guidelines</u>
Whole Body	0.2	6
Thyroid	36	75

<u>Control Room (operator)</u>	<u>NRC Staff- Calculated Doses</u>	<u>NRC Acceptance Criteria GDC-19 Guidelines</u>
Whole Body	<0.1	5
Thyroid	0.6	Equivalent to 5 rem whole body*

* Guideline doses provided in SRP Section 6.4 define the dose equivalent as 30 rem to the thyroid.

South Texas, Units 1 & 2

cc:

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