

November 29, 1988

Docket No. 50-458

Gulf States Utilities
ATTN: Mr. James C. Deddens
Senior Vice President
Post Office Box 220
St. Francisville, Louisiana 70775

Dear Mr. Deddens:

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT - RIVER BEND STATION, UNIT 1 (TAC NO. 69096)

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact" for your information. This assessment relates to your application dated August 12, 1988, for an amendment to revise the provisions in the Technical Specifications to reduce the minimum water coverage for irradiated fuel and control rods during their handling.

This assessment has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

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Walter A. Paulson, 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
November 29, 1988

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Project Directorate - IV
Division of Reactor Projects - III,
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/enclosure:
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Mr. James C. Deddens
Gulf States Utilities Company

River Bend Nuclear Plant

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONGULF STATES UTILITIES COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-458ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering the issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF-47 issued to Gulf States Utilities Company, (the licensee), for operation of the River Bend Station, Unit 1, located in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of the Proposed Action

The proposed amendment would revise the provisions in Technical Specifications (TS) 4.9.6.1.c and 4.9.6.2.c to permit decreasing the minimum water coverage for irradiated fuel and control rods during their handling.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendment dated August 12, 1988.

Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed change to the TS is required to relieve the licensee from the unnecessary hardship due to the narrow operating bands for pool levels in the containment and fuel building. The narrow operating bands have made it difficult to maintain the pool levels where the high or low water level annunciators are not actuated. The proposed action would also permit an

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easier transfer through the fuel transfer shield and would permit placing control rods on hangers provided for their storage in the fuel building pool.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revisions to the Technical Specifications. The proposed revisions would reduce the minimum water coverage above a single spent fuel assembly in the storage pool from 8 feet 6 inches to 8 feet 2 inches, and above an irradiated control rod from 8 feet 6 inches to 6 feet 9 inches. TS 4.9.6.1 would be modified to require demonstration that the normal uptravel stop interlock of the refueling platform main hoist maintains at least 8 feet 2 inches of water coverage above the top of the active irradiated fuel and that the normal uptravel stop interlock of the frame-mounted and monorail-mounted auxiliary hoists maintain at least 6 feet 9 inches of water coverage above the top of the irradiated control rod. The surveillance requirements of TS 4.9.6.2 would be modified in a similar manner to require demonstration that the normal uptravel stop interlock on the fuel handling platform main hoist maintains at least 8 feet 2 inches of water coverage above the top of the active irradiated fuel and that the normal uptravel stop interlock of the monorail-mounted auxiliary hoist maintains at least 6 feet 9 inches of water coverage above the top of the irradiated control rod.

The pool water (as well as the water level above the reactor pressure vessel flange) will remain unchanged at a minimum of 23 feet above the spent fuel in the storage racks. Therefore, the proposed change would not increase the probability or consequences of any accident previously evaluated.

The licensee estimated a radiation dose rate increase to personnel on the refueling platform of 0.2 mrem per hour due to the reduction of water coverage above the active zone of the irradiated fuel and 0.3 mrem per hour from an irradiated control rod. In addition, the licensee estimated that personnel radiation exposure over the plant design life would increase by 0.2 man-Rem from irradiated fuel and 0.01 man-Rem from irradiated control rods. Thus, there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure.

There are no changes being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite and the offsite dose consequences of a postulated fuel handling accident will not be affected by the proposed changes to the TS and the resulting offsite dose would remain well within the 10 CFR Part 100 guidelines.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impact.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed change to the TS involve systems located within the restricted areas as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment.

The Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendments and Opportunity for Hearing in connection with this action was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER

on August 25, 1988 (53 FR 32484) and a correction was published on October 24, 1988 (53 FR 41634). No request for hearing or petition for leave to intervene was filed following these notices.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission concluded that there is no significant adverse environmental effect that would result from the proposed action, alternatives with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated.

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested amendment. This would not reduce environmental impacts of plant operation and would result in reduced operational flexibility.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the River Bend Station, Unit 1, dated January 1985.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's request and did not consult other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed license amendment.

Based upon this environmental assessment, we conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated August 12, 1988 which is available for public inspection at the

Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., and
at the Government Documents Department, Louisiana State University, Baton
Rouge, Louisiana 70803.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this

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