

March 24, 1995

Mr. William L. Stewart  
Executive Vice President, Nuclear  
Arizona Public Service Company  
Post Office Box 53999  
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SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF EXEMPTION REQUEST FROM 10 CFR PART 50,  
APPENDIX J --PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION UNIT NO. 1  
(TAC NO. M89112)

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for exemption dated December 28, 1994. The exemption requested a one-time only exemption from the schedular requirements of 10 CFR 50 Appendix J, that would allow rescheduling the third containment integrated leak rate test (ILRT) in the first 10-year service period from the upcoming refueling outage to the next refueling outage (1R6 scheduled for September 1996). The requested exemption would also allow the decoupling of this third test from the endpoint of the first 10-year inservice inspection period.

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

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Linh Tran, Project Manager  
Project Directorate IV-2  
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. STN 50-528

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encls: See next page

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\* See previous concurrence

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Palo Verde

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.  
PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNIT NO. 1  
DOCKET NO. STN 50-528

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Paragraph III.D.1.(a), Type A Tests, to the Arizona Public Service Company, et al. (APS or the licensee), for operation of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Unit No. 1, located in Maricopa County, Arizona.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Paragraph III.D.1.(a), to the extent that a one-time schedular extension would permit rescheduling the third containment integrated leak rate test (ILRT) in the first 10-year service period from the fifth refueling outage (1R5) currently scheduled for May 1995 to the sixth refueling outage (1R6) planned for September 1996. The requested exemption would also allow the decoupling of this third test from the endpoint of the first 10-year inservice inspection (ISI) period.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated December 28, 1994.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The current containment integrated leakage rate test (ILRT) requirements for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1, as set forth in Appendix J, are that, after the preoperational leak rate test, a set of three Type A tests must be performed at approximately equal intervals during each 10-year period. Also, the third test of each set must be conducted when the plant is shut down for the 10-year plant inservice inspection. To date, for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1, the preoperational and the first two periodic ILRTs have been conducted. The most recent ILRT was conducted in February 1990, approximately 59 months ago. Thus, in accordance with Appendix J, an ILRT would have to be conducted during the upcoming refueling outage (1R5, scheduled for May 1995).

The licensee has requested a schedular exemption from Appendix J. Specifically, the exemption would allow APS to delay the Unit 1 third Type A test until the September 1996 refueling outage (1R6) and allow APS to only perform the three tests required by 10 CFR 50, Appendix J. As such, the third Type A test would be performed within 10 calendar years from the common start date of the initial ISI interval and 10 years and 8 months from the date of Unit 1 commercial operation. With this exemption, the interval between the second and third Type A test would be approximately 81 months.

The licensee also requested an exemption that would allow the decoupling of this third test from the endpoint of the first 10-year inservice inspection period. Specifically, subsequent Type A testing would be performed in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J (three Type A tests every 10 years at approximately equal intervals), commencing from the

completion of the Unit 1 sixth refueling outage (1R6). A CILRT would not need to be performed during the 10-year ISI outage planned for the Spring of 1998 (1R7). Therefore, the need for the licensee's proposed action is to allow a longer interval between the Palo Verde Unit 1 second and third periodic Type A ILRTs. This action, along with decoupling the requirement to perform an ILRT at the end of the 10-year inservice inspection period, will eliminate the need for an additional test. The licensee concluded that the extension of the Type A test interval has a negligible impact on overall risk and results in a cost savings.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed one-time exemption would not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and the proposed one-time exemption would not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents. The licensee has analyzed the results of previous Type A tests performed at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1. The licensee has provided an acceptable basis for concluding that the proposed one-time extension of the Type A test interval would maintain the containment leakage rates within acceptable limits. Accordingly, the Commission has concluded that the one-time extension does not result in a significant increase in the amounts of any effluents that may be released nor does it result in a significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed exemption only involves Type A testing on the containment. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that here are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

Since the Commission has concluded 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 proposed action. 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.

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 occupation radiation exposure. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in the "Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2, and 3," dated February 1982.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, the NRC staff consulted with the Arizona State official regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

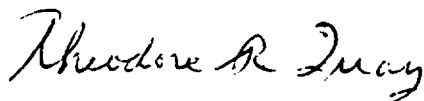
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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 exemption.

For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's letter dated December 28, 1994, 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 Phoenix Public Library, 12 East McDowell Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 24th day of March 1995.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Theodore R. Quay, Director  
Project Directorate IV-2  
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation