

March 10, 1997

Mr. James M. Levine  
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Arizona Public Service Company  
Post Office Box 53999  
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SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION,  
UNIT NO. 1 (TAC NO. M93014), UNIT NO. 2 (TAC NO. M93015), AND  
UNIT NO. 3 (TAC NO. M93016)

Dear Mr. Levine:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for amendments dated May 2, 1995, as supplemented by letter dated March 7, 1996. The proposed amendments would modify the licenses to authorize incorporation in the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR) of certain changes to the description of the facilities involving a revised large-break loss of coolant accident analysis that addresses a previously unanalyzed release path through the steam generators to the atmosphere.

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

Sincerely,

Original Signed By  
James W. Clifford, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate IV-2  
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. STN 50-528, STN 50-529,  
and STN 50-530

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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Mr. James M. Levine

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March 10, 1997

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANYDOCKET NOS. STN 50-528, STN 50-529, AND STN 50-530PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS NOS. 1, 2, AND 3ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-41, NPF-51, and NPF-74, issued to Arizona Public Service Company (the licensee), for operation of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Unit Nos. 1, 2, and 3, located in Maricopa County, Arizona.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would modify the licenses for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS), Unit Nos. 1, 2, and 3, to authorize incorporation in the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR) a revised large-break loss-of-coolant accident (LBLOCA) analysis. The revised LBLOCA analysis addresses a previously unanalyzed release path through the steam generators to the atmosphere.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated May 2, 1995, as supplemented by letter March 7, 1996.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would permit the UFSAR to be revised to address a previously unanalyzed release path through the steam generators to the atmosphere for the LBLOCA. This would incorporate this release path into the licensing basis of the facility.

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Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that there are no significant environmental considerations involved with the proposed action. The incorporation in the UFSAR for PVNGS Unit Nos. 1, 2, and 3 of the previously unanalyzed release path in the LBLOCA does not affect the design or operation of the plant, does not involve any modifications to the plant or any increase in the licensed power for the plant, does not affect plant effluents, does not increase the probability of any postulated accident and will not create a new accident, and does not create any new or unreviewed environmental impacts that were not considered in the Final Environmental Statement (FES).

The FES did not consider in its evaluation of a LBLOCA, the leakage of containment atmosphere through the steam generators and to the public. Assessment of environmental impacts of the LBLOCA accounted for radiological releases from the containment and emergency core cooling system into the environment. For the revised analysis of the LBLOCA, atmospheric releases through the steam generators could be considered part of the leakage of containment atmosphere into the environment, although the location of release is different. The FES analyzed radiological releases from the steam generators to the environment in the evaluation of the steam generator tube rupture accident. Thus, the FES evaluated releases to the environment from steam generators, but this release pathway was not included in the LBLOCA analysis. The revised LBLOCA analysis does not significantly increase the

environmental impacts of postulated accidents which are discussed in Section 5.9.2 of the FES, and is of no measurable environmental impact.

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.

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 the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2, and 3," dated February 1982.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on March 7, 1997, the staff consulted with the Arizona State official, Mr. William Wright of the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency, 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 the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated May 2, 1995, as supplemented by letter dated March 7, 1996, 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, 1221 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of March 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

  
James W. Clifford, Senior Project Manager  
Project Directorate IV-2  
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation