

February 16, 1990

Docket Nos. 50-266
and 50-301

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Mr. C. W. Fay, Vice President
Nuclear Power Department
Wisconsin Electric Power Company
231 West Michigan Street, Room 308
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

Dear Mr. Fay:

Enclosed is a copy of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact relating to your July 6, 1988 (supplemented November 1, 1989) application for license amendments for the Point Beach Nuclear Plant Unit Nos. 1 and 2. The proposed amendments would revise the TS relating to fuel storage to increase the U-235 content per axial centimeter for OFA fuel assemblies from 39.4 to 46.8 grams and permit the use of axial fuel blankets.

The Environmental Assessment has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

/s/

Warren H. Swenson, Project Manager
Project Directorate III-3
Division of Reactor Projects - III,
IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Environmental Assessment

cc: See next page

DOCUMENT NAME: 68862/68862 EA

Office: LA/PDIII-3
Surname: PKreutzer
Date: 2/12/90

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren H. Swenson".

Warren H. Swenson, Project Manager
Project Directorate III-3
Division of Reactor Projects - III,
IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Environmental Assessment

cc: See next page

Mr. C. W. Fay
Wisconsin Electric Power Company

Point Beach Nuclear Plant
Units 1 and 2

cc:

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Two Rivers, Wisconsin 54241

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONWISCONSIN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANYDOCKET NOS. 50-266 AND 50-301ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR-24 and DPR-27, issued to the Wisconsin Electric Power Company, (the licensee), for operation of the Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, located in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action

The proposed amendments would revise the provisions in the Technical Specifications (TS) relating to fuel storage. Specifically, the proposed amendments would increase the U-235 content per axial centimeter for OFA fuel assemblies from 39.4 to 46.8 grams and would permit the use of axial fuel blankets. The increase in U-235 content for the OFA fuel assemblies corresponds to an increase in fresh fuel enrichment from the current limit of 4.0 to 4.75 weight percent U-235. The U-235 content permitted for standard fuel assemblies would remain unchanged.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendments dated July 6, 1988, as supplemented by a letter dated November 1, 1989.

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The Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed change to the TS is required in order to permit the storage of fuel assemblies with an enrichment of up to 4.75 weight percent U-235.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to TS and concludes that storage and use of OFA fuel enriched with U-235 in excess of 4 weight percent and up to 4.75 weight percent at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant is acceptable. The safety considerations associated with higher enrichment and extended irradiation have been evaluated by the NRC staff and the staff has concluded that such changes would not adversely affect plant safety. The proposed changes have no adverse affect on the probability of any accident. The increased burnup may slightly change the mix of fission products that might be released in the event of a serious accident but such changes would not significantly affect the consequences of serious accidents. Routine radiological effluents are not affected. As a result, there is no increase in individual or cumulative radiation exposure.

The environmental impacts of transportation resulting from the use of higher enrichment and extended irradiation are discussed in the staff assessment entitled "NRC Assessment of the Environmental Effects of Transportation Resulting from Extended Fuel Enrichment and Irradiation." This assessment was published in the Federal Register on August 11, 1988 (53 FR 30355) as corrected on August 24, 1988 (53 FR 32322) in connection with the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1: Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. As indicated therein, the environmental cost contribution of an increase in fuel enrichment of up to 5 weight percent U-235 and irradiation limits of up to 60 Gigawatt

Days per Metric Ton (GWD/MT) are either unchanged, or may in fact be reduced from those summarized in Table S-4 as set forth in 10 CFR 51.52(c). These findings are applicable to these proposed amendments for the Point Beach Nuclear Plant. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impact.

The Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment and Opportunity for Hearing in connection with this action was published in the Federal Register on February 23, 1989 (54 FR 7900). No request for hearing or petition for leave to intervene was filed following this notice.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed change to the TS will in no way affect environs located outside the restricted area 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 amendments.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

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

The principal alternative would be to deny the requested amendments. 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 any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Point Beach Nuclear Plant Unit Nos. 1 and 2, dated May 1972.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

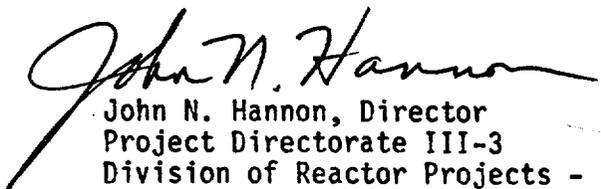
The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed license amendments.

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

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendments dated July 6, 1988 and a supplement dated November 1, 1989 which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. and at the Joseph P. Mann Library, 1516 Sixteenth Street, Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 16th day of February 1990.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION


John N. Hannon, Director
Project Directorate III-3
Division of Reactor Projects - III,
IV, V and Special Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation