

September 19, 1996

Mr. Harold B. Ray
Executive Vice President
Southern California Edison Company
San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station
Post Office Box 128
San Clemente, California 92674-0128

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF REQUEST TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM INITIAL ENRICHMENT FOR RELOAD FUEL AND STORAGE IN THE SPENT FUEL POOL - SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3 (TAC NOS. M94624 AND M94625)

Dear Mr. Ray:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your request for license amendment dated December 6, 1995. The proposed amendment would increase the maximum initial enrichment for reload fuel and storage in the spent fuel pool at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, Units 2 and 3.

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

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Mel B. Fields, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-2
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-361
and 50-362

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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Mr. Harold B. Ray

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September 19, 1996

cc w/encl:

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San Francisco, California 94106

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON
SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 2 AND 3
DOCKET NOS. 50-361 AND 50-362
ENVIRONMENTAL 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-10 and NPF-15, issued to Southern California Edison (the licensee) for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), Units 2 and 3, located in San Diego County, California.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action

By letter dated December 6, 1995, the licensee proposed to change the technical specifications (TSs) to allow an increase in fuel enrichment (Uranium 235) up to 4.8 weight percent. The present TS permit a maximum enrichment of 4.1 weight percent.

Need for Proposed Action:

The licensee intends to load fuel into the core during Cycle 9 and subsequent refueling outages which does not currently meet the TSs. By increasing the fuel enrichment, the licensee will implement the fuel strategies developed for SONGS Units 2 and 3.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to the TSs and concludes that storage and use of fuel enriched with U-235 up to 4.8 weight percent at SONGS Units 2 and 3 is acceptable. The safety

considerations associated with higher enrichments 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 effect on the probability of any accident. 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 I: 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 the proposed amendment for SONGS Units 2 and 3. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impact.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed changes involve systems located within 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 amendment.

The Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing in connection with this action was published in the Federal Register on April 10, 1996 (61 FR 15997).

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission concluded that there are no significant environmental effects that would result from the proposed action, any alternative 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 any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for SONGS Units 2 and 3, dated April 1981 (NUREG-0490).

Agencies and Persons Contacted

In accordance with its stated policy, on September 19, 1996, the Commission consulted with the California State official, Mr. Steve Hsu of the State Department of Health Services, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

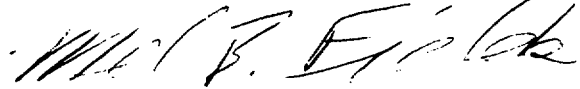
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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 this action, see the application for license amendment dated December 6, 1995. Copies are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC 20555, and at the temporary local public document room located at the Science Library, University of California, Irvine, California 92713.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 19th day of September 1996.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mel B. Fields", is written over the typed name.

Mel B. Fields, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-2
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation