April 22, 1999

Mr. Otto L. Maynard
President and Chief Executive Officer
Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation
Post Office Box 411
Burlington, Kansas 66839

SUBJECT: ISSUANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE WOLF CREEK GENERATING STATION, UNIT 1 (TAC NO. MA4955)

Dear Mr. Maynard:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for exemption dated December 29, 1998. The proposed exemption would allow the use of ASME Code Case N-514 as an alternative to the ASME Code requirements for reactor vessel pressure limits at low temperatures.

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

Sincerely,
Original Signed By

Kristine M. Thomas, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-482

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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Kristine M. Thomas

Kristine M. Thomas, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
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cc w/encl: See next page

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Kansas City, Kansas 66101

7590-01-P

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WOLF CREEK NUCLEAR OPERATING CORPORATION

DOCKET NO. 50-482

WOLF CREEK GENERATING STATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption to Facility Operating License No. NPF-42, issued to Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation (WCNOC), for operation of the Wolf Creek Generating Station, located in Coffey County, Kansas.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would exempt WCNOC from certain requirements of 10 CFR 50.60 and 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix G. The proposed exemption would allow WCNOC to apply American Society for Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Code Case N-514 for determining Wolf Creek Generating Station's cold overpressurization mitigation system (COMS) pressure setpoint.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated December 29, 1998.

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The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed exemption is needed to support an amendment to the Wolf Creek Technical Specifications which will revise the heatup, cooldown and COMS curves. The use of ASME Code Case N-514 would allow an increased operating band for system makeup and pressure control to allow operational flexibility.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that application of Code Case N-514 represents a special circumstance in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii) on specific exemptions, such that the specific requirements of 10 CFR 50.60 and Appendix G are "...not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule," which in this case is to protect the reactor vessel from brittle fracture.

The proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (i.e., the "no-action" alternative). 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 for the Wolf Creek Generating Station dated June 1982.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on March 5, 1999, the staff consulted with the Kansas State official, Mr. Vick Cooper, of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of 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 December 29, 1998, 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 Emporia State University, William Allen White Library, 1200 Commercial Street, Emporia, Kansas 66801 and Washburn University School of Law Library, Topeka, Kansas 66621.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 22nd day of April 1999.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Kristine M. Thomas

Kristine M. Thomas, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation