

August 9, 1995

Mr. William L. Stewart
Executive Vice President, Nuclear
Arizona Public Service Company
Post Office Box 53999
Phoenix, Arizona 85072-3999

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF EXEMPTION REQUEST FROM 10 CFR PART 50,
APPENDIX J - PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION UNIT NO. 3
(TAC NO. M92630)

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact related to your application for exemption dated June 21, 1995. The exemption requested a one-time schedular exemption from the requirement of 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Section III.D.1.(a), that would allow rescheduling the second containment integrated leak rate test (ILRT or Type A test) in the first 10-year inservice inspection (ISI) interval from the upcoming fifth refueling outage (3R5) scheduled for November 1995 to the sixth refueling outage (3R6) scheduled for April of 1997.

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

Sincerely,
Original Signed By
Charles Thomas, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-2
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. STN 50-530

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

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cc w/encl:

Mr. Steve Olea
Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Ms. Jacqueline Wyland (5)
Environmental Review Coordinator
Environmental Protection Agency
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, California 94105

T. E. Oubre, Esq.
Southern California Edison Company
P. O. Box 800
Rosemead, California 91770

Senior Resident Inspector
USNRC
P. O. Box 40
Buckeye, Arizona 85326

Regional Administrator, Region IV
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Harris Tower & Pavillion
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400
Arlington, Texas 76011-8064

Chairman, Maricopa County Board
of Supervisors
111 South Third Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

Mr. Aubrey V. Godwin, Director
Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency
4814 South 40 Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85040

Mr. Curtis Hoskins
Executive Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer
Palo Verde Services
2025 N. 3rd Street, Suite 200
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Roy P. Lessey, Jr., Esq.
Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer and Feld
El Paso Electric Company
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

Ms. Angela K. Krainik, Manager
Nuclear Licensing
Arizona Public Service Company
P.O. Box 52034
Phoenix, Arizona 85072-2034

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.
PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNIT NO. 3
DOCKET NO. STN 50-530

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 (PVNGS), Unit No. 3, located in Maricopa County, Arizona.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action would allow an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Paragraph III.D.1.(a), on a one-time schedular extension which would permit rescheduling the second containment integrated leak rate test (ILRT) in the first 10-year service period from the fifth refueling outage (3R5) currently scheduled for November 1995 to the sixth refueling outage (3R6) planned for April 1997.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated June 21, 1995.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The current ILRT requirements for PVNGS, Unit 3, as set forth in Appendix J, are that, after the pre-operational 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 (ISI). The first periodic Type A test was performed in May of 1991 during the second refueling outage in Unit 3 (3R2), 40 months from the date of Unit 3 commercial operation. The second periodic test is currently scheduled to be performed in November of 1995 during the fifth refueling outage (3R5), corresponding to an interval of 54 months. The third Type A test is currently planned to be performed during the seventh refueling outage (3R7) which would coincide with the completion of the first 10-year ISI interval.

The licensee has requested a schedular exemption from 10 CFR 50, Appendix J, Section III.D.1.(a) in regards to "approximately equal time intervals." Specifically, the proposed exemption would allow APS to delay the Unit 3 second Type A test until the sixth refueling outage (3R6). The Type A test would tentatively be scheduled for April of 1997, and would increase the interval between the first and second Type A test from 54 months to 71 months. The third Type A test is not being altered by this exemption request and is scheduled to be performed during the seventh refueling outage (3R7) which would coincide with the completion of the first 10-year ISI interval. This exemption request proposes an increase to the interval between the first and second Type A test but does not alter the frequency of testing (three Type A tests performed in a ten year period) during the first 10 year ISI interval. The visual inspection of the containment is not included in the proposed

exemption and will be performed as originally planned during the fifth refueling outage (3R5).

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 3. 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 there 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 not result in any 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, on July 17, 1995, 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.

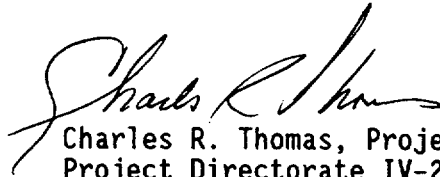
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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 exemption.

For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's letter dated June 21, 1995, 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, Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of August 1995.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Charles R. Thomas, Project Manager
Project Directorate IV-2
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation