

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF
NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ON
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO 10 CFR PART 72
"LIST OF APPROVED SPENT FUEL STORAGE CASKS: VSC-24 REVISION"

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

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I. THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is to amend 10 CFR Part 72 to revise the Pacific Sierra Nuclear Associates VSC-24 system listing within the 10 CFR Part 72 "List of Approved Spent Fuel Storage Casks" to include Amendment No. 4 to the Certificate of Compliance (CoC). Amendment No. 4 would modify the present cask system design to permit a Part 72 licensee to store different specific fuel control elements as integral components to fuel assemblies. Technical Specification (TS) 1.1.1 would be amended to change the flood condition velocity from 7.62 meters per second (m/s) [25 feet per second (ft/s)] to 5.39 m/s (17.7 ft/s); TS 1.2.1, 1.2.4, and 1.2.6 would be amended to address the additional fuel control elements approved for storage; and TS 1.2.10 would be deleted to eliminate redundant requirements for controlling moderator density. The cask can be relied on to provide safe confinement of spent fuel at any reactor site when used in accordance with the CoC. To use an NRC-approved cask system, the reactor licensee must ensure that the reactor site parameters and potential site-boundary doses are within the scope of the cask system safety analysis report and reactor license.

II. THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

This rulemaking is needed to revise a cask system listing within the "List of approved spent fuel storage casks" in 10 CFR 72.214. On March 30, 2001, and as supplemented on July 26, 2001, and April 29, May 16, and August 8, 2002, BNFL Fuel Solutions Corporation submitted an application to the NRC to amend CoC No. 1007 to permit a Part 72 licensee to store different specific fuel control elements as integral components to fuel assemblies. The certificate holder for the VSC-24 system is Pacific Sierra Nuclear Associates, which is a partnership between BNFL Fuel Solutions and Sierra Nuclear Corporation. TS 1.1.1 would be amended to change the flood condition velocity from 7.62 meters per second (m/s) [25 feet per second (ft/s)] to 5.39 m/s (17.7 ft/s); TS 1.2.1, 1.2.4, and 1.2.6 would be amended to address the additional fuel control elements approved for storage; and TS 1.2.10 would be deleted to eliminate redundant requirements for controlling moderator density. No other changes to the VSC-24 system design were requested in this application. The staff performed a detailed safety evaluation of the proposed CoC amendment request and found that an acceptable safety margin is maintained. In addition, the staff has determined that there is still reasonable assurance that public health and safety and the environment will be adequately protected.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The potential environmental impact of using the VSC-24 system was initially presented in the Environmental Assessment for the final rule to add the VSC-24 system to the list of approved spent fuel storage casks in 10 CFR 72.214 (58 FR 17948; April 7, 1993). Furthermore, each general licensee must assess the environmental impacts of the specific Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) in accordance with the requirements of

10 CFR 72.212(b)(2)(iii). This section requires the general licensee to perform written evaluations to demonstrate compliance with the environmental requirements of 10 CFR 72.104, “Criteria for radioactive materials in effluents and direct radiation from an ISFSI or MRS [Monitored Retrievable Storage Installation].”

VSC-24 systems are designed to mitigate the effects of design basis accidents that could occur during storage. Design basis accidents account for human-induced events and the most severe natural phenomena reported for the site and surrounding area. Postulated accidents analyzed for an ISFSI include tornado winds and tornado generated missiles, design basis earthquake, design basis flood, accidental cask drop, lightning effects, fire, explosions, and other incidents.

Considering the specific design requirements for each accident condition, the design of the cask would provide criticality control, prevent loss of containment, and maintain shielding from radiation within 10 CFR 72.106 limits.

The staff reviewed the proposed changes and confirmed that the changes provide reasonable assurance that the spent fuel can be stored safely and that the changes meet the acceptance criteria specified in 10 CFR Part 72. The staff documented its findings in a Safety Evaluation Report.

The occupational exposure is not significantly increased, and offsite dose rates remain well within the 10 CFR Parts 20 and 72 limits. The proposed action now under consideration would not change the potential environmental effects assessed in the initial rulemaking. Therefore, the NRC staff has determined that an acceptable safety margin is maintained and that no significant environmental impacts occur as a result of the amendment. Because the proposed changes will not change the environmental requirements for the storage of spent fuel, no change in environmental impact is anticipated.

IV. ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny approval of the amendment.

V. ALTERNATIVE USE OF RESOURCES

There were no irreversible commitments of resources determined in this assessment.

VI. AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONTACTED

No agencies or persons outside the NRC were contacted in connection with the preparation of this environmental assessment.

VII. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51.

Based on the foregoing environmental assessment, the NRC concludes that this rulemaking entitled "List of Approved Spent Fuel Storage Casks: VSC-24 Revision" will not have a significant incremental effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the NRC has determined that an environmental impact statement is not necessary for this rule.

Certain documents related to this rulemaking, including comments received by the NRC, may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD. These same documents may also be viewed and downloaded electronically via the rulemaking website (<http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>).

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