

October 02, 2003

Mr. Lawrence F. Womack
Vice President, Nuclear Services
Diablo Canyon Power Plant
P.O. Box 56
Avila Beach, CA 93424

SUBJECT: FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE PUBLISHING AN ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR AN
EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR 72.72(d) (TAC NO. L23399)

Dear Mr. Womack:

By letter dated December 21, 2001, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) submitted an application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for a 10 CFR Part 72 license to build and operate an independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant site. Included in your license application was a request for exemption from the records storage requirements of 10 CFR 72.72(d). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.35, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. The exemption from the provisions of 10 CFR 72.72(d) would allow PG&E to store a single set of records related to the proposed Diablo Canyon Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation in a records storage facility that meets the requirements of PG&E's NRC-approved Quality Assurance program for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant.

Our decision on this specific exemption request will be documented in the staff's safety evaluation report addressing your license application. Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for your information.

Sincerely,

/RA/
James R. Hall, Senior Project Manager
Spent Fuel Project Office
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No. 72-26 (50-275, -323)

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

cc: Mailing List

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U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
DOCKET NO. 72-26
PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
ISSUANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
REGARDING A PROPOSED EXEMPTION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption, pursuant to 10 CFR 72.7, from the provisions of 10 CFR 72.72(d) to Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E or applicant). The requested exemption would allow PG&E to maintain a single set of spent fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and reactor-related Greater than Class C (GTCC) waste records in accordance with the requirements of its NRC-approved Quality Assurance program, which satisfies the criteria of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B, for the Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) in San Luis Obispo County, California.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Identification of Proposed Action: In its application for an ISFSI license, submitted on December 21, 2001, PG&E requested an exemption from the requirement in 10 CFR 72.72(d); which states in part that, "Records of spent fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and reactor-related GTCC waste containing special nuclear material meeting the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section must be kept in duplicate. The duplicate set of records must be kept at a

separate location sufficiently remote from the original records that a single event would not destroy both sets of records.”

The proposed action before the Commission is whether to grant this exemption pursuant to 10 CFR 72.7.

Need for the Proposed Action: The applicant stated that ISFSI spent-fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and reactor-related GTCC waste records will be maintained in a manner consistent with the records of the DCP, which are stored in accordance with the NRC-approved Quality Assurance (QA) program. The approved QA program for the DCP complies with the requirements established in 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B, which incorporates by reference the specific recordkeeping requirements in 10 CFR 50.71(d)(1). PG&E did not request exemption from the records retention period requirements of 10 CFR 72.72(d). The applicant seeks to provide consistency in recordkeeping practices for the records related to the proposed DCP ISFSI and those records currently maintained under the DCP QA program. The exemption would also preclude the need for PG&E to construct and operate a separate, second records storage facility to store a duplicate set of spent fuel, high-level radioactive waste, and reactor-related GTCC waste records.

In its exemption request, PG&E indicated that the NRC-approved QA program for the DCP meets the provisions of ANSI N45.2.9-1974. The requirements in ANSI N45.2.9-1974 have been endorsed by the NRC as an acceptable method of satisfying the recordkeeping requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B, which states, in part, that “[c]onsistent with applicable regulatory requirements [including 10 CFR 50.71(d)(1)], the applicant shall establish requirements concerning record retention, such as duration, location, and assigned

responsibility.” Further requirements for the maintenance of nuclear power plant records are provided in 10 CFR 50.71(d)(1), which states, in part, that, “The licensee shall maintain adequate safeguards against tampering with and loss of records.” ANSI N.45.2.9-1974 also satisfies the requirements of 10 CFR 72.72 by providing for adequate maintenance of records regarding the identity and history of the spent fuel in storage. Such records would be subject to and need to be protected from the same types of degradation mechanisms or loss as nuclear power plant Quality Assurance records.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action: An exemption from the requirement to store a duplicate set of ISFSI records at a separate location has no impact on the environment. Storage of records does not change the methods by which spent fuel will be handled and stored at the DCPD ISFSI and does not change the amount of effluents, radiological or non-radiological, associated with the ISFSI.

Alternative 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.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: On August 12, 2003, Ms. Barbara Byron, Nuclear Policy Advisor for the California Energy Commission, was contacted regarding the environmental assessment for the proposed action and had no comments. The NRC staff has determined that a consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required because the proposed action is administrative/procedural in nature and will not affect listed

species or critical habitat. The NRC staff has also determined that the proposed action is not a type of activity having the potential to cause effects on historic properties because it is an administrative/procedural action. Therefore, no further consultation is required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

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 upon the foregoing EA, the Commission finds that the proposed action of granting the exemption from 10 CFR 72.72(d), so that PG&E may store spent fuel records for the proposed ISFSI in a single records storage facility, in accordance with its NRC-approved Quality Assurance program (which satisfies the criteria of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B, and 10 CFR 50.71(d)(1)), will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate, and that an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption is not necessary.

For further details with respect to this exemption request, see the PG&E ISFSI license application, and the accompanying Safety Analysis Report, dated December 21, 2001. The request for exemption was docketed under 10 CFR Part 72, Docket No. 72-26. These documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, One White Flint North Building, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, or from the publicly available records component of NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). These documents may be accessed through the NRC's Public Electronic

Reading Room on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. If there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the NRC Public Document Room (PDR) Reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737 or by e-mail at pdr@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 2nd day of October, 2003.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA/
James R. Hall, Senior Project Manager
Spent Fuel Project Office
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

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OFC:	SFPO	E	SFPO		OGC		SFPO	
NAME:	RHall		EZiegler				JMonninger	
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Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Units 1 and 2

cc:

NRC Resident Inspector
Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant
c/o U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 369
Avila Beach, CA 93424

Dr. Richard Ferguson, Energy Chair
Sierra Club California
1100 11th Street, Suite 311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Diane Curran
Harmon, Curran, Spielberg, & Eisenberg,
L.L.P.
1726 M Street N.W., Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036

Rochelle Becker
San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace
1037 Ritchie Rd.
Grover Beach, CA 93433

Chairman, San Luis Obispo County
Board of Supervisors
Room 370
County Government Center
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Mr. Truman Burns
Mr. Robert Kinosian
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness, Room 4102
San Francisco, CA 94102

Mr. Steve Hsu
Radiologic Health Branch
State Department of Health Services
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94327-7320

Diablo Canyon Independent Safety
Committee
ATTN: Robert R. Wellington, Esq.
Legal Counsel
857 Cass Street, Suite D
Monterey, CA 93940

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

Christopher J. Warner, Esq.
Pacific Gas & Electric Company
Post Office Box 7442
San Francisco, CA 94120

Mr. David H. Oatley, Vice President
Diablo Canyon Operations and
Plant Manager
Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant
P.O. Box 3
Avila Beach, CA 93424

Telegram-Tribune
ATTN: Managing Editor
1321 Johnson Avenue
P.O. Box 112
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Mr. Ed Bailey, Radiation Program Director
Radiologic Health Branch
State Department of Health Services
P.O. Box 942732 (MS 178)
Sacramento, CA 94327-7320

Mr. James D. Boyd, Commissioner
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street (MS 31)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ms. Charlotte Alexander
Vice President, Special Projects
Green Car Group
1241 Johnson Avenue #356
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Ellen Carroll
Environmental Coordinator
Department of Planning and Building
County of San Luis Obispo
County Government Center, Room 310
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

The Honorable Lois Capps
Member, United States
House of Representatives
ATTN: Greg Hass, District Representative
1411 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Darcie L. Houck, Staff Counsel
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street (MS 14)
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512