January 9, 2004

Mr. John L. Skolds, President
Exelon Nuclear
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

SUBJECT: LASALLE COUNTY STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2, ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS RE: CORE OPERATING LIMITS REPORT (TAC NOS. MB9888 AND MB9889)

Dear Mr. Skolds:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Commission) has issued the enclosed Amendment No. 164 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-11 and Amendment No. 150 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-18 for the LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2, respectively. The amendments are in response to your application dated July 1, 2003, as supplemented by letter dated December 10, 2003.

The amendments delete one and add two references to the list of analytical methods in Technical Specification (TS) 5.6.5, "Core Operating Limits Report (COLR)," that can be used to determine core operating limits. The deleted reference is to an analytical method that is no longer applicable to LaSalle County Station (LSCS). The new references will allow LSCS to use General Electric Company methods for the determination of fuel assembly critical power of Framatome Advanced Nuclear Fuel, Inc. Atrium-9B and Atrium-10 fuel.

A copy of the Safety Evaluation is also enclosed. The Notice of Issuance will be included in the Commission's biweekly *Federal Register* notice.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William A. Macon, Jr., Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos.: 50-373 and 50-374

Enclosures: 1. Amendment No. 164 to NPF-11
2. Amendment No. 150 to NPF-18
3. Safety Evaluation

cc w/encls: See next page

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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

cc:

Site Vice President - LaSalle County Station
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
2601 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

LaSalle County Station Plant Manager
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
2601 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

Regulatory Assurance Manager - LaSalle
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
2601 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9757

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
LaSalle Resident Inspectors Office
2605 North 21st Road
Marseilles, IL 61341-9756

Phillip P. Steptoe, Esquire
Sidley and Austin
One First National Plaza
Chicago, IL 60603

Assistant Attorney General
100 W. Randolph St. Suite 12
Chicago, IL 60601

Chairman
LaSalle County Board
707 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Attorney General
500 S. Second Street
Springfield, IL 62701

Chairman
Illinois Commerce Commission
527 E. Capitol Avenue, Leland Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Robert Cushing, Chief, Public Utilities Division
Illinois Attorney General's Office
100 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, IL 60601

Regional Administrator
U.S. NRC, Region III
801 Warrenville Road
Lisle, IL 60532-4351

Illinois Emergency Management Agency
Division of Disaster Assistance & Preparedness
110 East Adams Street
Springfield, IL 62701-1109

Document Control Desk - Licensing
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Senior Vice President - Nuclear Services
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Vice President - Operations Support
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Chief Operating Officer
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Vice President - Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Director Licensing
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Senior Counsel, Nuclear
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

Manager Licensing - Clinton and LaSalle
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
4300 Winfield Road
Warrenville, IL 60555

EXELON GENERATION COMPANY, LLC

DOCKET NO. 50-373

LASALLE COUNTY STATION, UNIT 1

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 164
License No. NPF-11

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:

   A. The application for amendment filed by the Exelon Generation Company, LLC (the licensee), dated July 1, 2003, as supplemented by letter dated December 10, 2003, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, the provisions of the Act, and the regulations of the Commission;

   C. There is reasonable assurance (i) that the activities authorized by this amendment can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public, and (ii) that such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   D. The issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public; and

   E. The issuance of this amendment is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51 of the Commission's regulations and all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

2. Accordingly, the license is amended by changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the enclosure to this license amendment and paragraph 2.C.(2) of the Facility Operating License No. NPF-11 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 164, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated in the license. The licensee shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

3. This license amendment is effective as of the date of its issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days of the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA by DPickett for/

Anthony J. Mendiola, Chief, Section 2
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment: Changes to the Technical Specifications

Date of Issuance: January 9, 2004

EXELON GENERATION COMPANY, LLC

DOCKET NO. 50-374

LASALLE COUNTY STATION, UNIT 2

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 150
License No. NPF-18

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:

   A. The application for amendment filed by the Exelon Generation Company, LLC (the licensee), dated July 1, 2003, as supplemented by letter dated December 10, 2003, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, the provisions of the Act, and the regulations of the Commission;

   C. There is reasonable assurance (i) that the activities authorized by this amendment can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public, and (ii) that such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;

   D. The issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public; and

   E. The issuance of this amendment is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 51 of the Commission's regulations and all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

2. Accordingly, the license is amended by changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the enclosure to this license amendment and paragraph 2.C.(2) of the Facility Operating License No. NPF-18 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(2) Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 150, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, are hereby incorporated in the license. The licensee shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

3. This license amendment is effective as of the date of its issuance and shall be implemented within 60 days of the date of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA by DPickett for/

Anthony J. Mendiola, Chief, Section 2
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment: Changes to the Technical Specifications

Date of Issuance: January 9, 2004

ATTACHMENT TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NOS. 164 AND 150

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NOS. NPF-11 AND NPF-18

DOCKET NOS. 50-373 AND 50-374

Replace the following pages of the Appendix "A" Technical Specifications with the enclosed pages. The revised pages are identified by amendment number and contain marginal lines indicating the area of change.

Remove Pages	Insert Pages
5.6-3	5.6-3
5.6-4	5.6-4

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

RELATED TO AMENDMENT NO. 164 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-11

AND AMENDMENT NO. 150 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-18

EXELON GENERATION COMPANY, LLC

LASALLE COUNTY STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2

DOCKET NOS. 50-373 AND 50-374

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By application dated July 1, 2003 (Ref. 1), as supplemented by letter dated December 10, 2003 (Ref. 2), Exelon Generation Company, LLC (EGC, the licensee) requested changes to the Technical Specifications (TS) for the LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2. The supplement dated December 10, 2003, provided additional information that clarified the application, did not expand the scope of the application as originally noticed, and did not change the staff's original proposed no significant hazards consideration determination as published in the *Federal Register* on November 12, 2003 (68 FR 64135).

The proposed changes would revise the TS. Specifically the proposed changes would delete one and add two references to the list of analytical methods in TS 5.6.5, "Core Operating Limits Report (COLR)," that can be used to determine core operating limits. The deleted reference is to an analytical method that is no longer applicable to LaSalle County Station (LSCS). The new references will allow LSCS to use General Electric Company (GE) methods for the determination of fuel assembly critical power of Framatome Advanced Nuclear Fuel, Inc. (Framatome) Atrium-9B and Atrium-10 fuel. The proposed changes are the result of a LSCS decision to insert GE14 fuel during the upcoming refueling outage at LSCS Unit 1 in January 2004. GE's safety analysis methodologies have been previously used at LSCS and GE14 fuel is currently in use at other EGC stations.

The licensee's submittal summarizes the development of the ATRIUM-10 GEXL97 correlation. The ATRIUM-10 GEXL97 correlation will be used to determine the critical power performance of the Framatome ATRIUM-10 fuel design. The ATRIUM-10 fuel in a mixed core will be in at least its second cycle of irradiation. As such, the ATRIUM-10 GEXL97 correlation would not be applied to reload batch quantities of first cycle (fresh) ATRIUM-10 fuel. The submittal describes the process used in the development of the GEXL97 correlation for prediction of critical power for ATRIUM-10 fuel and the determination of the overall ratio of the GEXL97 calculated critical power to the Framatome SPCB calculated critical power mean value and the associated uncertainty of that critical power correlation in the prediction of the ATRIUM-10 critical power performance.

Additionally, the proposed changes include editorial changes to existing references.

2.0 REGULATORY EVALUATION

The staff finds that the licensee in Section 6.0 of Attachment 1 of its submittal identified the applicable regulatory requirements. 10 CFR 50.34, “Contents of Applications; Technical Information,” requires that Safety Analysis Reports be submitted that analyze the design and performance of structures, systems, and components provided for the prevention of accidents and the mitigation of the consequences of accidents. As part of the core reload design process, licensees (or vendors) perform reload safety evaluations to ensure that their safety analyses remain bounding for the design cycle. To confirm that the analyses remain bounding, licensees confirm that key inputs to the safety analyses such as the Critical Power Ratio (CPR) are conservative with respect to the current design cycle. If key safety analysis parameters are not bounded, a re-analysis or re-evaluation of the affected transients or accidents is performed to ensure that the applicable acceptance criteria are satisfied.

There are no specific regulatory requirements for the review of topical report submittals. The staff review was based on the evaluation of the technical merit and compliance with any applicable regulations associated with reviews of topical reports.

3.0 TECHNICAL EVALUATION

The staff has reviewed the licensee’s regulatory and technical analyses in support of its proposed license amendment which are described in Sections 4.0 and 5.0 of Attachment 1 of the licensee’s submittal. The detailed evaluation below supports the conclusion that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and (3) the issuance of the amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

The hypothetical data base for the development of the GEXL97 correlation was obtained from the licensee. The data base consisted of ATRIUM-10 full bundle critical power data generated by the Framatome thermal-hydraulic subchannel code XCOBRA-T, incorporating the NRC approved Framatome SPCB ATRIUM-10 critical power correlation. The objective of this data collection was to obtain ATRIUM-10 critical quality input data appropriate for the GE critical quality - boiling length (GEXL) form critical power analysis.

The span of the data collection encompassed cosine, top peaked, bottom peaked, and double humped axial power shapes in order to cover the complete range of expected operation of the ATRIUM-10 fuel in the LSCS reload cores. The data was used to develop a new GEXL correlation for the ATRIUM-10 design. This new GEXL correlation for the ATRIUM-10 fuel was designated as GEXL97. The new GEXL97 correlation uses the same functional form as previous GEXL correlations with different constants for the GEXL correlation coefficient parameters.

The GEXL critical power correlation form was developed to provide a best estimate prediction of the onset of boiling transition in boiling water reactor (BWR) fuel assemblies during both steady-state and reactor transient conditions. The GEXL correlation was developed to provide a best estimate prediction of the onset of boiling transition in BWR fuel assemblies. The GEXL correlation is based on the relationship of critical quality with boiling length. It expresses bundle average critical quality as a function of boiling length, thermal diameter, system pressure, lattice geometry, local rod peaking pattern (R-factor), mass flux and annular flow length.

The GEXL correlation has been used in the safety analysis process for GE fueled BWRs since 1974. The use of the GEXL correlation is necessary for determining the minimum critical power ratio (MCPR) operating limits resulting from transient analysis, the MCPR safety limit analysis, and the core operating performance and design. The GEXL correlation is an integral part of the transient analysis methodology used by Global Nuclear Fuel (GNF). It is used to confirm the adequacy of the MCPR operating limit, and it can be used to determine the time of onset of boiling transition in the analysis of other events.

The staff's review considered the following: 1) adequacy of the hypothetical database generated with the Framatome sub-channel code XCOBRA-T for an experimental database; 2) proper determination of the uncertainty in the GEXL97 correlation's predictions for the ATRIUM-10 fuel design; and, 3) applicability of the proposed operating range of GEXL97 correlation to the ATRIUM-10 fuel supported by the range of the hypothetical database.

3.1 Validity of the Hypothetical Data Base and associated Uncertainties

The licensee used the approved Framatome SPCB correlation for the ATRIUM-10 fuel (as encoded in the sub-channel code XCOBRA-T) to generate a hypothetical database of predicted critical power values for a range of operating conditions corresponding to the range of the ATRIUM-10 correlation. This hypothetical database was then treated by GNF in the same way as an experimental database, using the approved methodology for GEXL correlation development. Utilizing this approach, GNF produced a new form of the GEXL correlation, namely GEXL97, intended for application only to the ATRIUM-10 fuel design.

The data for the development of GEXL97 specific to ATRIUM-10 fuel was generated using the NRC approved Framatome SPCB correlation. Specified rod-to-rod peakings, axial power shapes, pressure, mass flux and inlet sub-cooling were used with the Framatome SPCB correlation to determine the assembly critical power at dryout. The ATRIUM-10 fuel is a 10x10 fuel bundle with a central water channel. It contains a total of 83 full-length fuel rods and eight part-length rods.

The database used in the development of the GEXL97 correlation for the ATRIUM-10 fuel was provided in Table 2-1 of the submittal. This table shows the number of calculated critical power data points obtained using the Framatome SPCB critical power correlation for cosine, inlet, outlet, and double humped axial power distributions. It also shows the fuel pin dryout location that formed the basis of the 28 different sets of Framatome calculated critical power data. Table 2-2 of the same submittal, provides additional information by further dividing the data collected into subgroups of pressure, mass flux, and inlet sub-cooling.

Although the GEXL97 database generated in this manner is artificial in construct, created with a computer code which has encoded in it the SPCB correlation, which at best can only

approximate the actual critical power raw experimental data behavior of the ATRIUM-10 fuel, it can be expected with reasonable engineering practices, and proper statistical accountability, to predict critical power behavior with acceptable uncertainties. GNF used the statistical combination of uncertainty (SMU) method to determine the uncertainties. Treating the hypothetical database as if it were real data in the regression analysis to generate the correlation coefficients, therefore, introduces unavoidable error into the correlation being derived from it.

The local critical power values estimated with the approved SPCB correlation can be predicted to vary over the range of the hypothetical database. Since the GEXL97 correlation is fitted to this hypothetical database, the error in the critical power prediction of the GEXL97 correlation for a given set of conditions will have some additional error relative to the real critical power value for those conditions, over and above the uncertainty of the correlation's fit to the hypothetical database. Therefore, the approach of the correlation procedure can be valid only if overall uncertainty in the new GEXL97 correlation is appropriately characterized in terms of the uncertainty in its fit to the hypothetical database and the uncertainty of the critical power values in the hypothetical database itself.

The staff finds that the treatment of the overall uncertainty of the GEXL97 correlation for ATRIUM-10 fuel, as originally presented in the submittal, is complete in that it appropriately combines the uncertainty of the fit of GEXL97 correlation to the hypothetical database and the uncertainty of the database itself, which is a function of the uncertainty of the SPCB correlation.

3.2 Generation of the GEXL97 Correlation and the Range of Applicability

In developing the GEXL97 correlation, GNF took certain steps to optimize the GEXL97 critical power predictions for the ATRIUM-10 fuel design, and to minimize the prediction uncertainty. This process is identical to that used by GNF when developing GEXL correlation coefficients for GNF/GE fuel designs using raw experimental test data, and has been used in past development of GEXL correlations applicable to other co-resident legacy fuel.

The procedure used for development of the GEXL97 correlation is summarized below:

(a) First, a range of generated data covering all parameter(s) variations was selected to form a correlation development database. This database consist of the majority of the generated data. A separate data-set was set aside to form a correlation verification database.

(b) The GEXL97 correlation coefficients are then chosen to minimize the bias and standard deviation in correlating the development database, and to minimize any trend errors in reference to flow, pressure, sub-cooling, and R-factor.

(c) Once the optimum coefficients were determined, the apparent R-factors are calculated for each assembly. The apparent R-factor is defined as that R-factor value which yields an overall ECPR value of 1.0 for a given assembly. The ECPR is defined as the ratio of the GEXL97 calculated critical power to the Framatome SPCB calculated critical power.

(d) A final set of additive constants are determined by adjusting the preliminary additive constants, subject to minimizing the difference between the R-Factors.

The range of application for the GEXL97 correlation, as stated in the licensee's submittal, is the same as the range of the hypothetical database over which the correlation is derived. The applicable ranges are presented below:

i) Pressure: 800 to 1300 psia
ii) Mass Flux: 0.1×10^6 to 1.5×10^6 lb/hr-ft^2
iii) Inlet Sub-cooling: 0.1 to 100 Btu/lbm
iv) R-Factor: 1.03 -- 1.20

This application range covers the complete range of expected operation of the ATRIUM-10 fuel during normal steady state and transient conditions in the LSCS BWR reload cores.

The lower end of the Inlet Sub-cooling range and the lower end of the R-Factor, differ slightly from those presented in the licensee's original submittal dated July 1, 2003. In that document, the lower end of the ranges were extrapolated down to zero for the Inlet Sub-cooling and the R-Factor range was extrapolated down to 1.02. Following discussions with the NRC staff (documented in Ref. 2), the licensee and GNF decided to adjust these ranges to fall within the limits of the development database of the GEXL97.

With respect to the ranges stated above, GNF provided the results of analysis of the reference loading pattern for the LaSalle Unit 1, Cycle 11 mixed core reload, which has core operating characteristics that are representative of the conditions that will be encountered during this cycle. The CPR was extracted for all the ATRIUM-10 fuel throughout the entire cycle.

In summary, the NRC staff reviewed the analyses and results presented in NEDC-33106P, "GEXL97 Correlation for ATRIUM-10 Fuel," and determined that the analyses and results are in accordance with the guidance and limitations of 10 CFR 50.34, and the applicable sections of NUREG-0800, "Standard Review Plan for the Review of Safety Analysis Reports for Nuclear Power Plants." In addition, the staff concludes that the analysis presented in NEDC-33106P is acceptable because:

(a) The total uncertainty in the correlation's critical power predictions appropriately takes into account the fact that the uncertainty in the new correlation's fit to the hypothetical database and the uncertainty in the hypothetical database with respect to the underlying experimental data are appropriately treated;

(b) Generating the hypothetical database using the approved SPCB correlation encoded in the Framatome subchannel code XCOBRA-T is a reasonable engineering approach to dealing with mixed reload core fuel, where the experimental database and critical power correlation for the previous vendor's fuel is not available to the new fuel vendor;

(c) GNF intends to utilize the new GEXL97 correlation within the limits of the hypothetical data base, without extrapolation outside the approved limits of the data base, as specified in this safety evaluation (SE); and

(d) GNF confirmed that the CPR analyses for LaSalle Units 1 and 2 remain bounding, and that key inputs to the safety analyses such as the CPR are conservative with respect to the current design cycle.

Additionally, the staff found the licensee's proposed editorial changes to existing COLR references to be acceptable.

4.0 STATE CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the Illinois State official was notified of the proposed issuance of the amendments. The State official had no comments.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The amendments change a requirement with respect to the installation or use of a facility component located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. The NRC staff has determined that the amendments involve no significant increase in the amounts, and no significant change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite, and that there is no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. The Commission has previously issued a proposed finding that the amendments involve no significant hazards consideration, and there has been no public comment on such finding (68 FR 64135). Accordingly, the amendments meet the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of the amendments.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Commission has concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and (3) the issuance of the amendments will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

7.0 REFERENCES

1. Letter from T. W. Simpkin, Exelon Generation Company, to NRC, "Request for Amendment to Technical Specifications Section 5.6.5, "Core Operating Limits Report (COLR),"" dated July 1, 2003.

2. Letter from K. A. Ainger, Exelon Generation Company, to NRC, "Additional Information Regarding Request for Amendment to Technical Specifications Section 5.6.5, "Core Operating Limits Report (COLR),"" dated December 10, 2003.

Principal Contributors: A. Attard, NRR/DSSA/SRXB-A
E. Kendrick, NRR/DSSA/SRXB-A

Date: January 9, 2004