

Mr. J. V. Parrish
Chief Executive Officer
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P.O. Box 968 (Mail Drop 1023)
Richland, WA 99352-0968

April 6, 2005

SUBJECT: REVISION TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE TOPICAL REPORT,
"OPERATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION,"
FOR COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION (TAC NO. MC5814)

Dear Mr. Parrish:

By letter dated January 21, 2005, Energy Northwest submitted a change to the quality assurance program for the Columbia Generating Station in accordance with the provisions of 10 CFR 50.54(a)(4). Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.54(a)(4), the licensee identified a change that constitutes a reduction in commitment and, therefore, requires NRC approval prior to implementation. This change removes a commitment in the Operational Quality Assurance Program Description (QA Program).

Our review and bases for finding the proposed alternative to be acceptable are documented in the attached safety evaluation. The reduction in commitments continues to satisfy the standards and regulations, and is therefore, acceptable.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 301-415-3764.

Sincerely,

/RA by BKVaidya for/
Brian Benney, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-397

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

PROPOSED REVISION TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE TOPICAL REPORT

ENERGY NORTHWEST

COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION

DOCKET NUMBER 50-397

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated January 21, 2005, Energy Northwest (the licensee) submitted changes to the quality assurance (QA) program for the Columbia Generating Station, described in topical report, "Operational Quality Assurance Program Description" (QA topical). The licensee characterized the change as a reduction in commitment, subject to NRC staff approval prior to implementation, in accordance with 50.54(a)(4). The proposed change removes the plant manager from the position of Plant Operations Committee (POC) Chairman.

2.0 TECHNICAL INFORMATION IN THE SUBMITTAL

The licensee's QA program description currently designates the plant manager as the POC Vice Chairman. Appendix III, Section 2.1.2 of the QA topical states, in part, "The manager responsible for plant operation ..., the POC chairman, shall appoint in writing, the POC Vice Chairman, and individual members." The licensee states that designating a qualified individual other than the plant manager as the POC Chairman would be more in line with the independent advisory role of the POC.

3.0 REGULATORY AND TECHNICAL EVALUATION

Compliance with Appendix B to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50 requires an applicant to identify managerial and administrative controls to be used to ensure safe operation. The Standard Review Plan (SRP) NUREG-0800, Section 13.4, "Operational Review," provides the acceptance criteria used by the staff to evaluate the licensee's provisions for plant staff review of operational activities. The SRP stipulates that the licensee's provisions for plant staff review should meet the requirements described in Section 4.4 of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) N18.7-1976 (ANS 3.2), as endorsed by Regulatory Guide (RG) 1.33, Revision 2.

Section 4.4 of the ANSI N18.7, states that the POC should provide, as part of the normal duties of plant supervisory personnel, timely and continuing monitoring of operating activities to assist the Plant Manager in keeping abreast of general plant conditions and to verify that the

day-to-day operating activities are conducted safely and in accordance with applicable administrative controls. Neither the ANSI N18.7 nor the RG 1.33 is specific as to the position or title of the onsite committee chairman for operational reviews.

Based on review of the proposed change to the QA topical for Columbia Generating Station, the staff concludes that the licensee's program for operational reviews is consistent with the guidance of ANSI N18.7 and applicable regulatory requirements.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed change is acceptable, in that the QA program continues to satisfy the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B, applicable regulations and regulatory guidance.

Principal Contributor: P. Prescott

Date: April 6, 2005

Columbia Generating Station

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March 2005