

August 15, 2006

Mr. D. E. Grissette  
Vice President  
Southern Nuclear Operating  
Company, Inc.  
Post Office Box 1295  
Birmingham, AL 35201-1295

SUBJECT: VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2, ISSUANCE OF  
AMENDMENTS REGARDING POWER RANGE NEUTRON FLUX  
INSTRUMENTATION TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS (TAC NOS. MC8510  
AND MC8511)

Dear Mr. Stinson:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued the enclosed Amendment No. 143 to Facility Operating License NPF-68 and Amendment No. 123 to Facility Operating License NPF-81 for the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2. The amendments consist of changes to the Technical Specifications (TSs) in response to your application dated September 19, 2005, as supplemented on June 9, 2006.

The amendments revise TS Limiting Conditions for Operation 3.3.1, "Reactor Trip System Instrumentation," and TS Surveillance Requirement (SR) 3.2.4.2, "Quadrant Power Tilt Ratio (QPTR)." The proposed change revises TS 3.3.1, Condition D and the note in SR 3.2.4.2 to clarify when a flux map for QPTR is required.

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

Sincerely,

***/RA by RMartin for/***

Christopher Gratton, Sr. Project Manager  
Plant Licensing Branch II-1  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-424 and 50-425

Enclosures:

1. Amendment No. 143 to NPF-68
2. Amendment No. 123 to NPF-81
3. Safety Evaluation

cc w/encls: See next page

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SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY, INC.

GEORGIA POWER COMPANY

OGLETHORPE POWER CORPORATION

MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC AUTHORITY OF GEORGIA

CITY OF DALTON, GEORGIA

VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNIT 1

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 143  
License No. NPF-68

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
  - A. The application for amendment to the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Unit 1 (the facility) Facility Operating License No. NPF-68 filed by the Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc. (the licensee), acting for itself, Georgia Power Company, Oglethorpe Power Corporation, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, and City of Dalton, Georgia (the owners), dated September 19, 2005, as supplemented on June 9, 2006, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations as set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;
  - B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, the provisions of the Act, and the rules and 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 hereby amended by page changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment, and paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. NPF-68 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 143 , and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, both of which are attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into this license. Southern Nuclear shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

3. This license amendment is effective as of its date of issuance and shall be implemented within 90 days of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

*/RA/*

Evangelos C. Marinos, Chief  
Plant Licensing Branch II-1  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment:  
Changes to License No. NPF-68  
and the Technical Specifications

Date of Issuance: August 15, 2006

SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY, INC.

GEORGIA POWER COMPANY

OGLETHORPE POWER CORPORATION

MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC AUTHORITY OF GEORGIA

CITY OF DALTON, GEORGIA

VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNIT 2

AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE

Amendment No. 123  
License No. NPF-81

1. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has found that:
  - A. The application for amendment to the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Unit 2 (the facility) Facility Operating License No. NPF-81 filed by the Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc. (the licensee), acting for itself, Georgia Power Company Oglethorpe Power Corporation, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, and City of Dalton, Georgia (the owners), dated September 19, 2005, as supplemented on June 9, 2006, complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations as set forth in 10 CFR Chapter I;
  - B. The facility will operate in conformity with the application, the provisions of the Act, and the rules and 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 hereby amended by page changes to the Technical Specifications as indicated in the attachment to this license amendment, and paragraph 2.C.(2) of Facility Operating License No. NPF-81 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Technical Specifications and Environmental Protection Plan

The Technical Specifications contained in Appendix A, as revised through Amendment No. 123, and the Environmental Protection Plan contained in Appendix B, both of which are attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into this license. Southern Nuclear shall operate the facility in accordance with the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

3. This license amendment is effective as of its date of issuance and shall be implemented within 90 days of issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

*/RA/*

Evangelos C. Marinos, Chief  
Plant Licensing Branch II-1  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Attachment:  
Changes to License No. NPF-81  
and the Technical Specifications

Date of Issuance: August 15, 2006

ATTACHMENT

TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NO. 143

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-68

DOCKET NO. 50-424

AND

TO LICENSE AMENDMENT NO. 123

FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-81

DOCKET NO. 50-425

Replace the following pages of the Licenses and the Appendix A Technical Specifications (TSs) with the attached revised pages. The revised pages are identified by amendment number and contain marginal lines indicating the areas of change.

Remove Pages

License

License No. NPF-68, page 4

License No. NPF-81, page 4

TSs

3.2.4-4

3.3.1-2

Insert Pages

License

License No. NPF-68, page 4

License No. NPF-81, page 4

TSs

3.2.4-4

3.3.1-2

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

RELATED TO

AMENDMENT NO. 143 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NPF-68

AND

AMENDMENT NO. 123 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NPF-81

SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY, INC.

VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

DOCKET NOS. 50-424 AND 50-425

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By application dated September 19, 2005 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML052620463), as supplemented by letter dated June 9, 2006 (ADAMS Accession No. ML061530465), Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc. (Southern Nuclear, the licensee), requested changes to the Technical Specifications (TSs) for the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant Units 1 and 2 (Vogtle1/2). The revisions clarify TS action requirements to align flux mapping requirements in the two specifications by revising TS 3.3.1, Condition D for one inoperable channel of power range neutron flux - high when the channel input to the quadrant power tilt ratio (QPTR) is inoperable and revising the note in surveillance requirement (SR) 3.2.4.2.

The supplement dated June 9, 2006, 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 March 14, 2005 (71 FR 13179).

2.0 REGULATORY EVALUATION

In Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Part 50, Section 50.36, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) established its regulatory requirements related to the content of TSs. Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.36, TSs are required to include items in the following five specific categories related to plant operation, (1) safety limits, limiting safety system settings, and limiting control settings; (2) limiting conditions for operation; (3) surveillance requirements; (4) design features; and (5) administrative controls. Category (2), Section 50.36(c)(2)(i), establishes the lowest functional capability or performance levels of equipment required for safe operation of the facility. Category (2) further requires, "When a limiting condition for operation of a nuclear reactor is not met, the licensee shall shut down the reactor or follow any remedial action permitted by the technical specifications until the condition can be met." Category (3), Section 50.36(c)(3), establishes requirements relating to test, calibration, or inspection to



assure that the necessary quality of systems and components is maintained, that facility operation will be within safety limits, and that the limiting conditions for operation will be met. The rule does not, however, specify the particular requirements to be included in plant limiting condition for operation (LCO) (Category 2) or SR (Category 3) TSs.

In 1992, the NRC issued improved Standard Technical Specifications (STSs) to clarify the content and form of requirements necessary to ensure safe operation of nuclear power plants in accordance with all categories of requirements specified in 10 CFR 50.36. In general, a licensee cannot justify TS changes solely on the basis of adopting the model STSs. Changes that result in relaxation (less restrictive conditions) of TS requirements require detailed justification. When requirements have been shown to give little or no safety benefit, their relaxation or removal from the TSs may be appropriate. Other changes made to adopt the model STSs are new, more conservative than corresponding requirements in the current TSs (CTSs), or have additional restrictions that are not in the CTSs but are in the STSs. The staff evaluates the additional restrictions on plant operation to ensure that they enhance safety. Additionally, non-technical (administrative) TSs changes that incorporated human factors principles for the preferred format into the form and structure of the TSs so that plant operations personnel can use them more easily were evaluated by the NRC staff. These changes are editorial in nature or involve the reorganization or reformatting of CTS requirements without affecting technical content or operational restrictions.

Consequently, licensees making application to change plant-specific TS requirements, even though the changes are modeled after STSs, must include a plant-specific justification that is found to be acceptable to the staff for complying with the requirements of 10 CFR 50.36. Therefore, in review of the Vogtle 1/2 license amendment request dated September 19, 2005, as supplemented by letter dated June 9, 2006, the NRC staff's review made use of applicable regulations and regulatory guidance which includes the following:

- 10 CFR 50.36, Technical Specifications. 50.36(c)(2)(i), Limiting conditions for operation, and 50.36(c)(3) Surveillance requirements.
- NUREG-1431, "Standard Technical Specifications, Westinghouse Plants," Revision 3.0, dated June 2004.

### 3.0 TECHNICAL EVALUATION

The proposed amendment would revise TS LCO 3.3.1 Required Actions Condition D and the Note to SR 3.2.4.2 to align flux mapping requirements in the two specifications, and thus avoid confusion as to when a flux map for QPTR is required. Specifically, the proposed changes would revise TS 3.3.1, Condition D and the Note in SR 3.2.4.2 as follows:

- LCO 3.3.1, "RTS Instrumentation," Condition D, One Power Range Neutron Flux - High channel inoperable
  - Required Actions D.1.2, D.2.1 and D.2.2 are deleted. The remaining Required Actions are renumbered accordingly.

- A Note is added to refer to LCO 3.2.4 for an inoperable power range channel. The existing Note becomes Note 1 and the new Note is Note 2.
- SR 3.2.4.2, "QPTR," the Note is revised to require performance of the surveillance when power range neutron flux QPTR inputs are inoperable.

The licensee stated that the proposed changes to delete Required Actions D.1.2, D.2.1 and D.2.2 will avoid confusion as to when a flux map for QPTR is required. The licensee also stated that deleting these requirements from LCO 3.3.1 eliminates requirements that are duplicated in LCO 3.2.4.

#### Power Range Neutron Flux Instrumentation

The nuclear instrumentation system (NIS) power range detectors are located external to the reactor vessel and measure neutrons leaking from the core. The NIS power range detectors provide input to the rod control system and the steam generator (SG) water level control system. The power range neutron flux -high trip function ensures that protection is provided, from all power levels, against a positive reactivity excursion leading to departure from nucleate boiling during power operations. These can be caused by rod withdrawal or reductions in reactor coolant system temperature. The LCO requires all four of the power range neutron flux - high channels to be OPERABLE.

#### QPTR Limits

The QPTR limit ensures that the gross radial power distribution remains consistent with the design values used in the safety analyses. Precise radial power distribution measurements are made during startup testing, after refueling, and periodically during power operation. With an NIS power range channel inoperable, tilt monitoring for a portion of the reactor core becomes degraded. Large tilts are likely detected with the remaining channels, but the capability for detection of small power tilts in some quadrants is decreased. Performing SR 3.2.4.2 at a frequency of 12 hours provides an accurate alternative means for ensuring that any tilt remains within its limits.

#### 3.1 One Power Range Neutron Flux - High Channel Inoperable

Reactor Trip System Instrumentation, LCO 3.3.1, Condition D applies to one power range neutron flux - high channel inoperable. Condition D provides required actions D.1.1 and D.1.2 or alternatively, D.2.1 and D.2.2, to follow in lieu of shutting down the reactor by entering Mode 3 (Required Action D.3). Either of the paired required actions (D.1.1/D.1.2 or D.2.1/D.2.2) permit continued operation with the inoperable channel as long as both required actions in the pair are met.

#### Required Actions D.1.1 and D.1.2 Changes

Upon discovery of one power range neutron flux - high channel inoperable, D.1.1 allows 72 hours to place an inoperable channel in trip. In addition to placing the inoperable channel in the

tripped condition, thermal power must be reduced to # 75 percent (%) rated thermal power (RTP) within 78 hours (D.1.2).

In the time period between when the channel is known to be inoperable and before thermal power is reduced to # 75% RTP, current TSs would also require performance of SR 3.2.4.2 within 12 hours and once per 12 hours thereafter. Performing SR 3.2.4.2 confirms that the normalized symmetric power distribution is consistent with QPTR. Upon meeting the requirements of Required Action D.1.2, the requirements of SR 3.2.4.2 are no longer required to be performed because reducing the power level to # 75% RTP (D.1.2) prevents operation of the core with radial power distributions beyond the design limits even though with one NIS power range detector inoperable, 1/4 of the radial power distribution monitoring capability is lost.

The NRC staff reviewed the proposed D.1.1. and D.1.2 changes. The D.1.1 requirement to place the inoperable NIS channel in trip within 72 hours is retained. This results in a partial trip condition requiring only one-out-of-three logic for actuation of the reactor protection system. Deleting D.1.2 eliminates the requirement to reduce THERMAL POWER to # 75% RTP. Reducing thermal power to < 75% RTP is an unnecessary complication based on the proposed revision to SR 3.2.4.2 since the new surveillance note requires performing SR 3.2.4.2 when the NIS channel input to QPTR is inoperable. Performing SR 3.2.4.2 at the specified 12-hour frequency will be an accurate alternative means for ensuring that any core power tilt remains within core operating limits, thus adequate protection will be assured. The NRC staff finds these changes acceptable because the partial trip condition requirement is retained, thus ensuring the core is protected against a positive reactivity excursion leading to departure from nucleate boiling during power operations, and the SR 3.2.4.2 Note changes (discussed below) to perform SR 3.2.4.2 only when power range neutron flux - high channel QPTR inputs are inoperable above 75% RTP ensure the core power distributions will not exceed design limits.

The NRC staff finds deleting Required Action D.1.2 acceptable because the requirements that remain are equivalent to the STs, do not result in any substantive change in operating requirements, and are consistent with the Commission's regulations. These changes will provide for a consistent application of the TS actions and required tests.

#### Required Actions D.2.1 and D.2.2

Upon discovery of one power range neutron flux - high channel inoperable, D.2.1 allows 72 hours to place the inoperable channel in trip. In addition to placing the inoperable channel in the tripped condition, required action D.2.2 provides the appropriate action for the condition when the NIS channel input to QPTR is also inoperable (at any power level) by requiring performance of SR 3.2.4.2 once per 12 hours.

The NRC staff reviewed the proposed D.2.1 and D.2.2 changes. D.2.1 is deleted, but the requirement to place the inoperable NIS channel in trip is retained as D.1. Within 72 hours this would result in a partial trip condition requiring only one-out-of-three logic for actuation. D.2.2 is deleted since retaining this requirement would duplicate flux mapping requirements that are included with SR 3.2.4.2 when the NIS channel QPTR inputs are inoperable above 75% RTP. Flux mapping requirements do not apply below 75% RTP when the NIS channel QPTR inputs are inoperable. The licensee stated that the existing layout of LCO 3.3.1, Condition D.2.1 and

D.2.2 could incorrectly lead an operator to believe that only the options of D.1.1 and D.1.2 could apply, potentially overlooking the requirement to do a flux map for QPTR within 12 hours.

The NRC staff finds that replacing D.2.1 with D.1.2 and deleting Required Action D.2.2 are acceptable because the requirements that remain are equivalent to the STSs, do not result in any substantive changes in operating requirements, and are consistent with the Commission's regulations. These changes will provide for a consistent application of the TS actions and required tests.

#### Addition of Note 2 to Required Action D

Required Action D is revised by inserting a note directing operators to refer to LCO 3.2.4 upon discovery of an inoperable power range channel.

The reference to LCO 3.2.4 replaces the need to specify performing SR 3.2.4.2 requirements in Required Action D.2.2 when the NIS input to QPTR is inoperable. This is acceptable because D.2.2 restates the requirements of SR 3.2.4.2 to calculate QPTR every 12 hours as compensation for lost monitoring capability due to an inoperable NIS channel input to QPTR for thermal power  $\leq$  75% RTP. This proposed change will help eliminate potential confusion regarding the completion time to perform SR 3.2.4.2.

The NRC staff reviewed all of the administrative changes proposed by Southern Nuclear to eliminate the potential confusion regarding duplicating the requirement to perform SR 3.2.4.2 and finds them acceptable because they are equivalent to the STSs, do not result in any substantive changes in operating requirements, and are consistent with the Commission's regulations. These changes will provide for a consistent application of the TS actions and required tests.

#### 3.2 SR 3.2.4.2 Changes

The existing note to SR 3.2.4.2 limits performing this SR to when one power range channel is inoperable with THERMAL POWER  $\leq$  75% RTP. The note is clarified to require performance only if the input to QPTR from one or more power range neutron flux - high channels is inoperable with THERMAL POWER  $\leq$  75% RTP. If the inoperable power range channel remains capable of providing a valid input to QPTR, there is no need to perform SR 3.2.4.2. This proposed change will help eliminate potential confusion regarding the completion time to perform SR 3.2.4.2.

The NRC staff reviewed the deleted portions of the note proposed by Southern Nuclear and finds them acceptable because they are compatible with the STSs, do not result in any substantive change in operating requirements, and are consistent with the Commission's regulations. These changes will provide for a consistent application of the TS remedial actions and required tests.

### 3.3 Changes to Bases Pages

The licensee included in its application the revised TS Bases pages to be implemented with the TS change. The NRC staff finds that the TS Bases Control Program is the appropriate process for updating the affected TS Bases pages, and has, therefore, not included the revised Bases pages with these amendments.

### 4.0 STATE CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the Georgia 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 facility components located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20 and change the surveillance requirements. 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 (71 FR 13179). 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.

Principal Contributor: C Schulten, NRR

Date: August 15, 2006

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 1 & 2

cc:

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