



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

November 17, 2008

Mr. William R. Campbell, Jr.  
Chief Nuclear Officer and  
Executive Vice President  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
6A Lookout Place  
1101 Market Street  
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

SUBJECT: WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 1 - PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION  
FOR AMENDMENT TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE (TAC NO. ME0106)

Dear Mr. Campbell:

The enclosed announcement was forwarded to *The Herald-News* (Dayton, Tennessee) for publication. This announcement relates to your application dated November 12, 2008, for amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF-90. The proposed amendment would revise Technical Specification (TS) TS 3.4.15, "RCS [Reactor Coolant System] Leakage Detection," to remove the requirement for one operable containment atmosphere gaseous radioactivity monitor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John G. Lamb".

John G. Lamb, Senior Project Manager  
Watts Bar Special Projects Branch  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-390

Enclosure:  
Public Notice

cc w/encl: Distribution via Listserv

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO AMEND OPERATING LICENSE AT THE WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 1

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has received an application dated November 12, 2008, from Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA or licensee), for an exigent amendment to the operating license for the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant (WBN), Unit 1, located in Rhea County, Tennessee.

The proposed amendment revises Technical Specification (TS) TS 3.4.15, "RCS [Reactor Coolant System] Leakage Detection," to remove the requirement for one operable containment atmosphere gaseous radioactivity monitor, which is one of the three RCS leakage detection systems currently required by TSs. Specifically, the proposed amendment would remove credit for the gaseous radiation monitor for RCS leakage detection. Improvements in nuclear fuel reliability over time have resulted in the reduction of effectiveness of the gaseous monitors in detecting very small leaks and changes in leak rate. The proposed amendment request also addresses required changes to the actions and surveillance requirements as a result of the removal of the operability requirement for the gaseous radiation monitor.

On October 29, 2008, TVA entered Limiting Condition of Operation (LCO) 3.4.15 due to maintenance issue with a particulate radiation monitor. TVA remained in the LCO after the maintenance was completed on the particulate monitor because TVA declared the containment gaseous radiation monitor inoperable since there is insufficient activity in the RCS under desired operating conditions to enable a gaseous monitor to sense a 1-gallon per minute leak within 1 hour; therefore, the TS must be changed to resolve this issue, and TVA is currently in a 30-day TS action statement allowed outage time.

As discussed in the licensee's application, dated November 12, 2008, TVA requested that the proposed amendment be processed by the NRC staff on an exigent basis in

accordance with the provisions in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Section 50.91(a)(6) in order to prevent an unnecessary plant shutdown.

The licensee and the NRC staff have evaluated this proposed change with regard to the determination of whether or not a significant hazards consideration is involved as discussed below. Operation of WBN Unit 1, in accordance with the proposed amendment will not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated. The proposed change has been evaluated and determined to not increase the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated. The proposed change does not make any hardware changes and does not alter the configuration of any plant system, structure or component (SSC). The containment atmosphere gaseous radioactivity monitor is not credited for use in the initiation of any automatic protective functions. The proposed change only removes the containment atmosphere gaseous radioactivity monitor for meeting the operability requirements for TS 3.4.15. Therefore, the probability of occurrence of an accident is not increased. The TS will continue to require diverse means of leakage detection equipment, thus ensuring that leakage due to cracks would continue to be identified prior to breakage and the plant shutdown accordingly. Therefore, the consequences of an accident are not increased.

The proposed amendment will not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously analyzed. The proposed change does not involve the use or installation of new equipment and the currently installed equipment will not be operated in a new or different manner. No new or different system interactions are created and no new processes are introduced. The proposed changes will not introduce any new failure mechanisms, malfunctions, or accident initiators not already considered in the design and licensing bases. The proposed change does not affect any SSC associated with an accident initiator. Based on this evaluation, the proposed change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The proposed amendment will not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The proposed change does not make any alteration to any RCS leakage detection components. The proposed change removes the gaseous channel of the containment atmosphere radioactivity monitor from TS 3.4.15. The proposed amendment continues to require diverse means of leakage detection equipment with capability to promptly detect RCS leakage. Additional diverse means of leakage detection capability are available, although not provided in TS. Based on this evaluation, the proposed change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Following an initial review of this application, the requested amendment has been evaluated against the standards in 10 CFR 50.92 and the NRC staff has made a proposed (preliminary) determination that the requested amendment involves no significant hazards considerations. The changes do not significantly increase the probability or consequences of any accident previously considered, nor create the possibility of an accident of a different kind, nor significantly decrease any margin of safety.

If the proposed determination that the requested license amendment involves no significant hazards consideration becomes final, the NRC staff will issue the amendment without first offering an opportunity for a public hearing. An opportunity for a hearing will be published in the *Federal Register* at a later date and any hearing request will not delay the effective date of the amendment.

If the NRC staff decides in its final determination that the amendment does involve a significant hazards consideration, a notice of opportunity for a prior hearing will be published in the *Federal Register* and, if a hearing is granted, it will be held before the amendment is issued.

Comments on the proposed determination of no significant hazards consideration may be (1) telephoned to L. Raghavan, Chief, Watts Bar Special Projects Branch, by collect call to 301-415-2429, or by facsimile to 301-415-2102, (2) e-mailed to [Rags.Raghavan@nrc.gov](mailto:Rags.Raghavan@nrc.gov), or (3) submitted in writing to the Chief, Rulemaking, Directives and Editing Branch, Division of

Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. All comments received by close of business on November 24, 2008 from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays will be considered in reaching a final determination. A copy of the application may be examined electronically through the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room link at the NRC Web site <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> and at the Commission's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209, or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov).

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Sincerely,

/RA/

John G. Lamb, Senior Project Manager  
Watts Bar Special Projects Branch  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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