

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 52-036; NRC-2008-0616]

Entergy Operations, Inc.

Combined License Application for River Bend Unit 3

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Exemption; issuance.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing an exemption in response to a July 18, 2014, request from Entergy Operations, Inc. (EOI) which requested an exemption from Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR) updates included in their Combined License (COL) application. The NRC staff reviewed this request and determined that it is appropriate to grant the exemption with the stipulation that the updates to the FSAR must be submitted the earlier of the resumption of the COL application review or December 31, 2015.

DATES: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]

ADDRESSES: Please refer to Docket ID **NRC-2008-0616** when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may access publicly-available information related to this action by the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2008-0616**. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-287-3422; e-mail: Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov. For technical questions, contact

the individuals listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document.

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- **NRC's PDR:** You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC's PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynnea Wilkins, Office of New Reactors, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC, 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-1377; e-mail: Lynnea.Wilkins@gmail.com.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The following sections include the text of the exemption in its entirety as issued to EOI.

I. Background

On September 25, 2008, EOI submitted to the NRC a COL application for one

Economic Simplified Boiling-Water Reactor to be constructed and operated near St. Francisville, Louisiana in West Feliciana Parish. On December 4, 2008, the NRC accepted for docketing the River Bend Station Unit 3 (RBS3) COL application (ADAMS Accession No. ML083370275, Docket No. 52-036). On January 9, 2009, EOI requested that the NRC temporarily suspend review of the application and the NRC granted EOI's request (ADAMS Accession No. ML090080277) while the application remained docketed. On December 3, 2012 (ADAMS Accession No. ML12342A231), EOI submitted updates to the Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR), per Section 50.71(e)(3)(iii) of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR). On September 30, 2013 (ADAMS Accession No. ML13275A066), EOI requested an exemption from the 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) requirements to submit COL FSAR updates. The exemption was granted by the NRC on December 4, 2013 (ADAMS Accession Nos. ML13297A247 and ML13297A248). On July 18, 2014 (ADAMS Accession No. ML14202A337), EOI requested another exemption from the 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) requirements to submit COL FSAR updates.

II. Request/Action

Section 50.71(e)(3)(iii) requires that an applicant for a COL under Subpart C of 10 CFR Part 52, must update their FSAR annually during the period from docketing the application to the Commission making its 10 CFR 52.103(g) finding.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) the next scheduled annual update of the FSAR concerning the RBS3 COL application would be due in December 2014 based on the granted exemption on December 4, 2013 (ADAMS Accession Nos. ML13297A247 and ML13297A248). By letter dated January 9, 2009, EOI requested that the NRC suspend review of the RBS3 COL. The NRC granted EOI's request for suspension (ADAMS Accession No. ML090080277)

and all review activities related to the RBS3 COL application were suspended while the application remained docketed. In a letter dated, July 14, 2014 (ADAMS Accession No. ML14202A337), EOI requested that the RBS3 COL application be exempt from the 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) requirements the earlier of the resumption of the RBS3 COL application review or December 31, 2015.

EOI's requested exemption is interpreted as a schedule change from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii). The exemption would allow EOI to submit the next FSAR update the earlier of resumption of the EOI application review or December 31, 2015. The current FSAR update requirement could not be changed, absent the exemption.

III. Discussion

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12 the Commission may, upon application by any interested person or upon its own initiative, grant exemptions from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, including 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) when: (1) the exemption(s) are authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to public health or safety, and are consistent with the common defense and security; and (2) special circumstances are present. As relevant to the requested exemption, special circumstances exist if: "application of the regulation in the particular circumstances would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule" (10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(iii)) and if "the exemption would provide only temporary relief from the applicable regulation and the licensee or applicant has made good faith efforts to comply with the regulation" (10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(v)).

The purpose of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) is to ensure that the NRC has the most up to date information regarding the COL application, in order to perform an efficient and effective review. The rule targeted those applications that are being actively reviewed by the NRC.

Because EOI requested the NRC to suspend its review of the RBS3 COL application, compelling EOI to submit its FSAR on an annual basis is not necessary as the FSAR will not be changed or updated until the review is restarted. Requiring the updates would result in undue hardship on EOI, and the purpose of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) would still be achieved if the update is submitted the earlier of the restart of the resumption of EOI's application review or December 31, 2015.

The requested exemption to defer submittal of the next update to the FSAR included in the RBS3 COL application would provide only temporary relief from the regulations of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii). As evidenced by the proper submittal of annual updates on December 6, 2010 (ADAMS Accession No. ML103440074), December 7, 2011 (ADAMS Accession No. ML11343A568), and December 3, 2012 (ADAMS Accession No. ML12342A231), EOI has made good faith efforts to comply with 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) prior to requesting suspension of the review. EOI's exemption request asks the NRC to grant exemption from 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) to December 31, 2015 or coincident with resuming the review of the RBS3 COL application, whichever occurs first.

For the reasons stated above, the application of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) in this particular circumstance can be deemed unnecessary and the granting of the exemption would allow only temporary relief from a rule that the applicant had made good faith efforts to comply with, therefore special circumstances are present.

Authorized by Law

The exemption is a schedule exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii). The exemption would allow EOI to submit the next RBS3 FSAR update the earlier of the resumption of EOI's application or December 31, 2015 in lieu of the required scheduled submittal in December 2014. As stated above, 10 CFR 50.12 allows the NRC to

grant exemptions from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50. The NRC staff has determined that granting EOI the requested exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) will provide only temporary relief from this regulation and will not result in a violation of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, or the NRC's regulations. Therefore, the exemption is authorized by law.

No Undue Risk to Public Health and Safety

The underlying purposes of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii), is to provide for a timely and comprehensive update of the FSAR associated with a COL application in order to support an effective and efficient review by the NRC staff and issuance of the NRC staff's safety evaluation report. The requested exemption is solely administrative in nature, in that it pertains to the schedule for submittal to the NRC of revisions to an application under 10 CFR Part 52, for which a license has not been granted. In addition, since the review of the application has been suspended, any update to the application submitted by EOI will not be reviewed by the NRC at this time. Based on the nature of the requested exemption as described above, no new accident precursors are created by the exemption thus, neither the probability, nor the consequences of postulated accidents are increased. Therefore, there is no undue risk to public health and safety. Plant construction cannot proceed until the NRC review of the application is completed, a mandatory hearing is completed and a license decision is made, the probability of postulated accidents is not increased. Additionally, based on the nature of the requested exemption, as described above, no new accident precursors are created by the exemption; thus neither probability, nor the consequences of postulated accidents are not increased. Therefore, there is no undue risk to public health and safety.

Consistent with Common Defense and Security

The exemption would allow EOI to submit the next RBS3 FSAR update the earlier of the resumption of EOI's application review or December 31, 2015. This schedule change has no relation to security issues. Therefore, the common defense and security is not impacted.

Special Circumstances

Special circumstances, in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii) are present “[a]pplication of the regulation in the particular circumstances would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule” (10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii)). The underlying purpose of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) is to ensure that the NRC has the most up-to date information in order to perform its review of a COL application efficiently and effectively. Because the requirement to annually update the FSAR was intended for active reviews and the RBS3 COL application review is now suspended, the application of this regulation in this particular circumstance is unnecessary in order to achieve its underlying purpose. If the NRC were to grant this exemption, and EOI were then required to update its FSAR the earlier of the resumption of EOI's application review or December 31, 2015, the purpose of the rule would still be achieved.

Special circumstances, in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(v) are present whenever the exemption would provide only temporary relief from the regulation and the applicant has made good faith efforts to comply with this regulation. Because of the assumed and imposed new deadline of (the earlier of the resumption of EOI's application review or December 31, 2015), EOI's exemption request seeks only temporary relief from the requirement that it file an update to the FSAR included in the RBS3 COL application. Therefore, since the relief from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) would be temporary and the applicant has made good faith efforts to comply with the rule, and the underlying purpose of the rule is not served by application of the rule in this circumstance, the special circumstances required by 10 CFR

50.12(a)(2)(ii) and 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(v) for the granting of an exemption from 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) exist.

Eligibility for Categorical Exclusion from Environmental Review:

With respect to the exemption's impact on the quality of the human environment, the NRC has determined that this specific exemption request is eligible for categorical exclusion as identified in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(25) and justified by the NRC staff as follows:

(c) The following categories of actions are categorical exclusions:

(25) Granting of an exemption from the requirements of any regulation of this chapter, provided that—

(i) There is no significant hazards consideration;

The criteria for determining whether there is no significant hazards consideration are found in 10 CFR 50.92. The proposed action involves only a schedule change regarding the submission of an update to the application for which the licensing review has been suspended. Therefore, there is no significant hazards considerations because granting the proposed exemption would not:

(1) Involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or

(2) Create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or

(3) Involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

(ii) There is no significant change in the types or significant increase in the amounts of any effluents that may be released offsite;

The proposed action involves only a schedule change which is administrative in nature, and does not involve any changes to be made in the types or significant increase in the

amounts of effluents that may be released offsite.

(iii) There is no significant increase in individual or cumulative public or occupational radiation exposure;

Since the proposed action involves only a schedule change which is administrative in nature, it does not contribute to any significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure.

(iv) There is no significant construction impact;

The proposed action involves only a schedule change which is administrative in nature; the application review is suspended until further notice, and there is no consideration of any construction at this time, and hence the proposed action does not involve any construction impact.

(v) There is no significant increase in the potential for or consequences from radiological accidents; and

The proposed action involves only a schedule change which is administrative in nature, and does not impact the probability or consequences of accidents.

(vi) The requirements from which an exemption is sought involve:

(B) Reporting requirements;

The exemption request involves submitting an updated FSAR by EOI
and

(G) Scheduling requirements;

The proposed exemption relates to the schedule for submitting FSAR updates to the
NRC.

IV. Conclusion

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(1) and (2), the exemption is authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to the public health and safety, and is consistent with the common defense and security. Also special circumstances are present. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants EOI the exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(3)(iii) pertaining to the River Bend Station Unit 3 COL application to allow submittal of the next FSAR update the earlier of the resumption of the COL application review or December 31, 2015.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22, the Commission has determined that the exemption request meets the applicable categorical exclusion criteria set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(25), and the granting of this exemption will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of December 2014.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

/RA/

Ronaldo Jenkins, Chief
Licensing Branch 3
Division of New Reactor Licensing
Office of New Reactors