

June 28, 2016

Mr. B. H. Whitley, Director
Regulatory Affairs
Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc.
42 Inverness Center Parkway
Birmingham, AL 35242

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE REVIEW OF SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY'S REQUEST FOR LICENSE AMENDMENT (LAR 16-004) AND EXEMPTION FOR THE VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT UNITS 3 AND 4: PASSIVE CORE COOLING SYSTEM (PXS) DESIGN CHANGES TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL GAS INTRUSION (CAC NO. RT5004)

Dear Mr. Whitley:

By letter dated May 5, 2016 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML16126A276), Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) submitted a request for a license amendment and an exemption to Combined License (COL) Numbers NPF-91 and NPF-92, for the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP) Units 3 and 4, respectively. The proposed changes revise the Combined Licenses (COL) concerning the design details of the safety-related passive core cooling system (PXS), the nonsafety-related normal residual heat removal system (RNS), and the nonsafety-related containment air filtration system (VFS). The amendment request proposes changes to the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR) in the form of departures from the plant-specific Design Control Document (DCD) Tier 2 information, and involves changes to related plant-specific DCD Tier 1 information, with corresponding changes to the associated COL Appendix C information.

SNC has also requested an exemption from the provisions of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 52, Appendix D, Section III.B, "Design Certification Rule for the AP1000 Design, Scope and Contents," to allow a departure from the elements of the certification information in Tier 1 of the generic DCD.

The purpose of this letter is to provide the results of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's acceptance review of these requests. The acceptance review was performed to determine if there is sufficient technical information in scope and depth to allow the NRC staff to complete its detailed technical reviews. The acceptance review is also intended to identify whether the application has any readily apparent information insufficiencies in its characterization of the regulatory requirements or the licensing basis of the plant.

Consistent with Section 50.90 of the 10 CFR, an amendment to the license must fully describe the changes requested, and follow as far as applicable, the form prescribed for original applications. Section 52.79 of the 10 CFR addresses content of technical information required. This section stipulates that the submittal address the design and operating characteristics, unusual or novel design features, and principal safety considerations.

B. Whitley

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The NRC staff has reviewed your application and concluded that it does provide technical information in sufficient detail to enable the NRC staff to complete its detailed technical review and make an independent assessment regarding the acceptability, of the proposed amendment and exemption, in terms of regulatory requirements and the protection of public health and safety and the environment. Given the lesser scope and depth of the acceptance review as compared to the detailed technical review, there may be instances in which issues that impact the NRC staff's ability to complete the detailed technical review are identified despite completion of an adequate acceptance review. You will be advised of any further information needed to support the NRC staff's detailed technical review by separate correspondence.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-2809 or Paul.Kallan@nrc.gov

Sincerely,
/RA/

Paul Kallan, Senior Project Manager
Licensing Branch 4
Division of New Reactor Licensing
Office of New Reactors

Docket No(s): 52-025
52-026

cc: See next page

B. Whitley

- 2 -

The NRC staff has reviewed your application and concluded that it does provide technical information in sufficient detail to enable the NRC staff to complete its detailed technical reviews and make an independent assessment regarding the acceptability, of the proposed amendment and exemption, in terms of regulatory requirements and the protection of public health and safety and the environment. Given the lesser scope and depth of the acceptance review as compared to the detailed technical review, there may be instances in which issues that impact the NRC staff's ability to complete the detailed technical review are identified despite completion of an adequate acceptance review. You will be advised of any further information needed to support the NRC staff's detailed technical review by separate correspondence.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-2809 or Paul.Kallan@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,
/RA/

Paul Kallan, Senior Project Manager
Licensing Branch 4
Division of New Reactor Licensing
Office of New Reactors

Docket No(s): 52-025
52-026

cc: See next page

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***via email**

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Vogtle Units 3 & 4 Mailing List

(Revised 05/17/2016)

cc:

Resident Manager
Oglethorpe Power Corporation
Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Plant
7821 River Road
Waynesboro, GA 30830

Resident Inspector
Plant Vogtle 3&4
8805 River Road
Waynesboro, GA 30830

Office of the Attorney General
40 Capitol Square, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Mr. Barty Simonton
Environmental Radiation Program Manager
Environmental Protection Division
Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources
4224 International Pkwy, Suite 120
Atlanta, GA 30354-3906

Southern Nuclear Op. Co.
Document Control Coordinator
42 Inverness Center parkway
Attn: B236
Birmingham, AL 35242

Gene Stilp
1550 Fishing Creek Valley Road
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Anne F. Appleby
Oglethorpe Power Corporation
2100 East Exchange Place
Tucker, GA 30084

Mr. Robert E. Sweeney
IBEX ESI
4641 Montgomery Avenue
Suite 350
Bethesda, MD 20814

County Commissioner
Office of the County Commissioner
Burke County Commission
Waynesboro, GA 30830

George B. Taylor, Jr.
2100 East Exchange Pl
Atlanta, GA 30084-5336

Mr. Wayne Guilfoyle
Commissioner
District 8
Augusta-Richmond County Commission
4940 windsor Spring Rd
Hephzibah, GA 30815

Brian H. Whitley
42 Inverness Center Parkway
BIN B237
Birmingham, AL 35242

Gwendoly Jackson
Burke County Library
130 Highway 24 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830

Mr. Reece McAlister
Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
Atlanta, GA 30334

Vogle Units 3 & 4 Mailing List

Email

agaughtm@southernco.com (Amy Aughtman)
annacom@westinghouse.com (Michael J. Annacone)
awc@nei.org (Anne W. Cottingham)
Bartley.Higgins@hq.doe.gov (Bartley Higgins)
becky@georgiawand.org (Becky Rafter)
bhwhitle@southernco.com (Brian Whitley)
Bill.Jacobs@gdsassociates.com (Bill Jacobs)
bjadams@southernco.com (Brad Adams)
burrouno@westinghouse.com (Nicholle Burroughs)
bwwaites@southernco.com (Brandon Waites)
castelca@westinghouse.com (Curtis Castell)
comerj@westinghouse.com (James Comer)
couturgf@westinghouse.com (Gerald Couture)
crenshjw@westinghouse.com (John Crenshaw)
crpierce@southernco.com (C.R. Pierce)
dahjones@southernco.com (David Jones)
david.hinds@ge.com (David Hinds)
david.lewis@pillsburylaw.com (David Lewis)
dgbost@southernco.com (Danny Bost)
dlfulton@southernco.com (Dale Fulton)
drculver@southernco.com (Randy Culver)
durhamdc@westinghouse.com (David Durham)
ed.burns@earthlink.net (Ed Burns)
edavis@pegasusgroup.us (Ed David)
erg-xl@cox.net (Eddie R. Grant)
fdhundle@southernco.com (Forrest Hundley)
G2NDRMDC@southernco.com (SNC Document Control)
graysw@westinghouse.com (Scott W. Gray)
james1.beard@ge.com (James Beard)
jannina.blanco@pillsburylaw.com (Jannina Blanco)
jantol1dj@westinghouse.com (David Jantosik)
jenmorri@southernco.com (Jennifer Buettner)
jim@ncwarn.org (Jim Warren)
John.Bozga@nrc.gov (John Bozga)
Joseph_Hegner@dom.com (Joseph Hegner)
jpredd@southernco.com (Jason R. Redd)
jranalli@meagpower.org (Jerry Ranalli)
jtgasser@southernco.com (Jeff Gasser)
karen.patterson@ttnus.com (Karen Patterson)
karlg@att.net (Karl Gross)
kdfili@southernco.com (Karen Fili)
kim.haynes@opc.com (Kim Haynes)
kmseiber@southernco.com (Kristin Seibert)
kmstacy@southernco.com (Kara Stacy)

Vogle Units 3 & 4 Mailing List

KSutton@morganlewis.com (Kathryn M. Sutton)
kwaugh@impact-net.org (Kenneth O. Waugh)
lchandler@morganlewis.com (Lawrence J. Chandler)
markus.popa@hq.doe.gov (Markus Popa)
mcintyba@westinghouse.com (Brian McIntyre)
mdmeier@southernco.com (Mike Meier)
media@nei.org (Scott Peterson)
Melissa.Smith@Hq.Doe.Gov (Melissa Smith)
Michael.Kuca@hq.doe.gov (Michael Kuca)
mike.price@opc.com (M.W. Price)
mlgraves@southernco.com (Michelle Graves)
MSF@nei.org (Marvin Fertel)
myox@southernco.com (Mike Yox)
nirsnet@nirs.org (Michael Mariotte)
Nuclaw@mindspring.com (Robert Temple)
patriciaL.campbell@ge.com (Patricia L. Campbell)
Paul@beyondnuclear.org (Paul Gunter)
pbessette@morganlewis.com (Paul Bessette)
r.joshi15@comcast.net (Ravi Joshi)
randall@nexusamllc.com (Randall Li)
rjarrett@southernco.com (Robyn Jarrett)
RJB@NEI.org (Russell Bell)
Ronald.Jones@scana.com (Ronald Jones)
russpa@westinghouse.com (Paul Russ)
rwink@ameren.com (Roger Wink)
sabinski@suddenlink.net (Steve A. Bennett)
sara@cleanenergy.org (Sara Barczak)
sblanton@balch.com (Stanford Blanton)
sfrantz@morganlewis.com (Stephen P. Frantz)
Shiva.Granmayeh@hq.doe.gov (Shiva Granmayeh)
sjackson@meagpower.org (Steven Jackson)
skauffman@mpr.com (Storm Kauffman)
sroetger@psc.state.ga.us (Steve Roetger)
stephan.moen@ge.com (Stephan Moen)
taterrel@southernco.com (Todd Terrell)
tom.miller@hq.doe.gov (Tom Miller)
TomClements329@cs.com (Tom Clements)
Vanessa.quinn@dhs.gov (Vanessa Quinn)
Wanda.K.Marshall@dom.com (Wanda K. Marshall)
wasparkm@southernco.com (Wesley A. Sparkman)
wayne.marquino@ge.com (Wayne Marquino)
weave1dw@westinghouse.com (Doug Weaver)
x2gabeck@southernco.com (Gary Becker)