

**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**[Docket Nos. 52-025 and 52-026; NRC-2008-0252]**

**Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 3 and 4;**

**Southern Nuclear Operating Company**

**Hydrogen Venting from Passive Core Cooling System (PXS) Compartments**

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Exemption and combined license amendment; issuance.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is granting exemption to allow a departure from the certification information of Tier 1 of the generic design control document (DCD) and is issuing License Amendment Nos. 84 and 83 to Combined Licenses (COL), NPF-91 and NPF-92, respectively. The COLs were issued to Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc., and Georgia Power Company, Oglethorpe Power Corporation, MEAG Power SPVM, LLC, MEAG Power SPVJ, LLC, MEAG Power SPVP, LLC, Authority of Georgia, and the City of Dalton, Georgia (the licensee); for construction and operation of the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP) Units 3 and 4, located in Burke County, Georgia.

The granting of the exemption allows the changes to Tier 1 information that is requested in the amendment. Because the acceptability of the exemption was determined in part by the acceptability of the amendment, the exemption and amendment are being issued concurrently.

**DATES:** The exemptions and amendments were issued on August 23, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** Please refer to Docket ID **NRC-2008-0252** when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may access information related to this document, which the NRC possesses and is publicly available, using any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2008-0252**. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-415-3463; e-mail: [Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov](mailto:Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document.

- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may obtain publicly-available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "[ADAMS Public Documents](#)" and then select "[Begin Web-based ADAMS Search](#)." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov). The ADAMS accession number for each document referenced (if it is available in ADAMS) is provided the first time that it is mentioned in this document. The request for the amendment and exemption was submitted by letter dated February 22, 2017 (ADAMS Accession No. ML17053A425) and supplemented by letter dated June 2, 2017 (ADAMS Accession No. ML17153A362).

- **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:** Paul Kallan, Office of New Reactors, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-2809; e-mail: [Paul.Kallan@nrc.gov](mailto:Paul.Kallan@nrc.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **I. Introduction**

The NRC is granting exemptions from Paragraph B of Section III, "Scope and Contents," of appendix D, "Design Certification Rule for the AP1000," to part 52 of title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), and issuing License Amendment Nos. 84 and 83 to COLs, NPF-91 and NPF-92, respectively, to the licensee. The exemptions are required by Paragraph A.4 of Section VIII, "Processes for Changes and Departures," appendix D, to 10 CFR part 52 to allow the licensee to depart from Tier 1 information. With the requested amendment, the licensee proposes to depart from approved AP1000 DCD Tier 2 information (test and tables) as incorporated into the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR) as plant-specific DCD information, and also proposes to depart from involved plant-specific Tier 1 information (and associated COL Appendix C information). Specifically, the amendment request proposes to revise the licensing basis information to reflect changes to the locations of the hydrogen venting primary openings in the passive core cooling system (PXS) valve/accumulator rooms inside containment.

Part of the justification for granting the exemptions was provided by the review of the amendments. Because the exemption is necessary in order to issue the requested license amendment, the NRC granted the exemptions and issued the amendments concurrently, rather than in sequence. This included issuing a combined safety evaluation containing the NRC staff's review of both the exemption request and the license amendment. The exemptions met all applicable regulatory criteria set forth in §§ 50.12, 52.7, and Section VIII.A.4 of appendix D to 10 CFR part 52. The license amendments were found to be acceptable as well. The combined safety evaluation is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML17213A224.

Identical exemption documents (except for referenced unit numbers and license numbers) were issued to the licensee for VEGP Units 3 and 4 (COLs NPF-91 and NPF-92). The exemption documents for VEGP Units 3 and 4 can be found in ADAMS under Accession Nos. ML17213A219 and ML17213A221, respectively. The exemption is reproduced (with the exception of abbreviated titles and additional citations) in Section II of this document. The amendment documents for COLs NPF-91 and NPF-92 are available in ADAMS under Accession Nos. ML17213A222 and ML17213A223, respectively. A summary of the amendment documents is provided in Section III of this document.

## **II. Exemption**

Reproduced below is the exemption document issued to Vogtle Units 3 and Unit 4. It makes reference to the combined safety evaluation that provides the reasoning for the findings made by the NRC (and listed under Item 1) in order to grant the exemption:

1. In a letter dated February 22, 2017, and supplemented by letter dated June 2, 2017, the licensee requested from the Commission an exemption from the provisions of 10 CFR part 52, appendix D, Section III.B, as part of license amendment request 17-003, "Hydrogen Venting from Passive Core Cooling System (PXS) Compartments (LAR-17-003)."

For the reasons set forth in Section 3.1, "Evaluation of Exemption," of the NRC staff's Safety Evaluation, which can be found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML17213A224, the Commission finds that:

- A. the exemption is authorized by law;
- B. the exemption presents no undue risk to public health and safety;
- C. the exemption is consistent with the common defense and security;

- D. special circumstances are present in that the application of the rule in this circumstance is not necessary to serve the underlying purpose of the rule;
- E. the special circumstances outweigh any decrease in safety that may result from the reduction in standardization caused by the exemption; and
- F. the exemption will not result in a significant decrease in the level of safety otherwise provided by the design.

2. Accordingly, the licensee is granted an exemption from the certified DCD Tier 1 information, with corresponding changes to Appendix C of the Facility Combined Licenses as described in the licensee's request dated February 22, 2017 and supplemented by letter dated June 2, 2017. This exemption is related to, and necessary for, the granting of License Amendment Nos. 84 and 83, which is being issued concurrently with this exemption.

3. As explained in Section 5.0, "Environmental Consideration," of the NRC staff's Safety Evaluation (ADAMS Accession No. ML17213A224), these exemptions meets the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9). Therefore, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment needs to be prepared in connection with the issuance of the exemption.

- 4. These exemptions are effective as of the date of its issuance.

### **III. License Amendment Request**

By letter dated February 22, 2017, and supplemented by letter dated June 2, 2017, the licensee requested that the NRC amend the COLs for VEGP, Units 3 and 4, COLs NPF-91 and NPF-92. The proposed amendment is described in Section I of this *Federal Register* notice.

The Commission has determined for these amendments that the application complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's rules and regulations. The Commission has made appropriate findings as required by the Act and the Commission's rules and regulations in 10 CFR Chapter I, which are set forth in the license amendment.

A notice of consideration of issuance of amendment to facility operating license or combined license, as applicable, proposed no significant hazards consideration determination, and opportunity for a hearing in connection with these actions, was published in the *Federal Register* on March 28, 2017 (82 FR 15377). No comments were received during the 30-day comment period.

The Commission has determined that these amendments satisfy the criteria for categorical exclusion in accordance with 10 CFR 51.22. Therefore, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared for these amendments.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Using the reasons set forth in the combined safety evaluation, the staff granted the exemptions and issued the amendments that the licensee requested on February 22, 2017 and supplemented June 2, 2017.

The exemptions and amendments were issued on August 23, 2017 as part of a combined package to the licensee (ADAMS Accession No. ML17213A217).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September 2017.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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