

DEC 15 1983

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Docket No. 50-397

Mr. G. C. Sorensen, Manager  
Regulatory Programs  
Washington Public Power Supply System  
P. O. Box 968  
3000 George Washington Way  
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Mr. Sorensen:

Subject: WPPSS Nuclear Project No. 2 - Request for Exemption from 10 CFR  
50.44 Regarding Containment Inerting

By letter dated October 10, 1983, WPPSS requested that WNP-2 be exempted from the 10 CFR 50.44(c)(3)(i) requirement that Mark I and Mark II type containments be inerted six months after initial criticality.

This requirement in the regulations recognizes a long established staff policy to permit the operation of BWR plants with non-inerted containments during start-up testing. The high frequency of containment entries during this period of plant operations make it impractical to operate with an inerted containment.

However, since WNP-2 has not achieved its initial criticality, we find that it is premature based on the information you have supplied, to judge that the six months allowed in the regulations is insufficient for this purpose.

Accordingly, we are denying your request for an exemption to this 10 CFR 50.44(c)(3)(i) requirement at this time. However, if two-to-three months after initial criticality, you determine that your start-up program cannot be completed within six months, we will be pleased to consider a new request for relief from this six month limit taking into account the factor(s) that support the requested relief.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

T. M. Novak, Assistant Director  
for Licensing  
Division of Licensing

cc: See next page  
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WNP-2

Mr. G. C. Sorensen, Manager  
Regulatory Programs  
Washington Public Power Supply System  
P. O. Box 968  
3000 George Washington Way  
Richland, Washington 99352

cc: Nicholas Reynolds, Esquire  
Debevoise & Liberman  
1200 Seventeenth Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

Mr. G. E. Doupe, Esquire  
Washington Public Power Supply System  
P. O. Box 968  
3000 George Washington Way  
Richland, Washington 99352

Nicholas Lewis, Chairman  
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council  
Mail Stop PY-11  
Olympia, Washington 98504

P. L. Powell, Licensing Manager  
Washington Public Power Supply System  
P. O. Box 968  
Richland, Washington 99352

Mr. W. G. Conn, Sr. N/M Group Supervisor  
Burns and Roe, Incorporated  
601 Williams Boulevard  
Richland, Washington 99352

Mr. Richard Feil  
U.S. NRC Resident Inspector  
WPPSS-2 NPS  
P. O. Box 69  
Richland, Washington 99352

Dr. G. D. Bouchey, Manager  
Nuclear Safety & Regulatory Programs  
Washington Public Power Supply System  
P. O. Box 968, MD 650  
Richland, Washington 99352

Mr. J. D. Martin  
WNP-2 Plant Manager  
Washington Public Power Supply System  
P. O. Box 968  
Richland, Washington 99352



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