

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONWASHINGTON PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEMDOCKET NO. 50-397NUCLEAR PROJECT NO. 2ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from Facility Operating License No. NPF-21, issued to the Washington Public Power Supply System (the licensee), for operation of the Washington Nuclear Project No. 2 (WNP-2), located in Benton County, Washington.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of the Proposed Action:

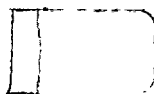
The proposed one-time exemption to 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2), would allow the licensee to extend the completion date for the administration of the annual licensed operator examinations for the WNP-2 requalification program from October 23, 1999, to February 12, 2000.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated May 7, 1999.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The schedular exemption is requested on a one-time only basis due to WNP-2 transitioning from a 12-month to a 24-month fuel cycle. As part of this transition, the Spring 1999 refueling outage has been moved to the Fall 1999 time frame. The current scheduled annual operating test conflicts with the Fall refueling outage. This one-time exemption will allow additional licensed operator support during the current refueling outage, which will provide a

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safety enhancement during plant shutdown operations, enhance post-maintenance testing and eliminate the need to conduct annual operating tests on overtime which will reduce operator fatigue. The affected licensed operators will continue to demonstrate and possess the required levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to safely operate the plant throughout the extension period via continuation of the current satisfactory licensed operator requalification program. In meeting the requirement for the administration of the annual operating tests as currently scheduled, the refueling outage could be prolonged without a net benefit to safety, and would otherwise have a detrimental effect on the public interest.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes, since the operators will continue to participate in a requalification program, they will maintain their knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to safely operate the plant through the extension period.

The proposed exemption will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.



Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (i.e., the "no-action" alternative). Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Washington Public Power System Nuclear Project No. 2 dated December 1981.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on June 4, 1999, the staff consulted with the Washington State official, Mr. Crowley of the Department of Health, State of Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated May 7, 1999, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, D.C., and at the local public



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document room located at the Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Street, Richland,
Washington 99352.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of June 1999.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Jack Cushing, Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate IV & Decommissioning
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