

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.
PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION
UNIT NOS. 1, 2, AND 3
DOCKET NOS. 50-528, 50-529, AND 50-530

RECEIPT OF PETITION FOR DIRECTOR'S DECISION UNDER 10 C.F.R. § 2.206

Notice is hereby given that by petition dated October 23, 1992, Thomas J. Saporito, Jr. (petitioner) requested that the Commission take action with regard to Arizona Public Service Company's (APS or licensee) Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station Units 1, 2, and 3. Specifically, the petitioner requests that the Commission institute a show cause proceeding to modify, suspend, or revoke the operating licenses of the three Palo Verde units and order their immediate shutdown until such time as a nuclear safety evaluation can be performed on approximately 72 safety valves currently installed at the nuclear station.

As a basis for the request, the petitioner states that APS and the NRC cannot be sure whether the 72 safety valves will operate within their design bases and setpoint tolerances to mitigate an overpressurization event in any of the Palo Verde units. In support of this assertion, the petitioner provides the following reasons: (a) An APS request of November 13, 1990, to revise the technical specifications of its operating licenses for Palo Verde Units 1, 2, and 3 to increase the allowable setpoint tolerances for the main steam safety valves was signed by a person who was not technically qualified

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to provide safety commitments for this or any license amendment request and 56 persons in engineering positions at Palo Verde hold those positions without having a bachelor of science degree in engineering. (b) The licensee's interoffice memorandum of March 22, 1991, responds to an employee who stated a concern that the amendment request to increase the allowable setpoint tolerance for the safety valves indicates that the peak analyzed pressure for the loss of condenser vacuum transient is 2740.9 pounds per square inch absolute (psia), leaving only a 9.1 psia margin to the safety limit of 2750 psia. (c) The NRC staff's interoffice memorandum of December 4, 1991, stated it was not prudent to entertain the licensee's request to revise its technical specifications at this time. (d) APS's June 1992 Condition Report Disposition Request (CRDR No. 1-2-0139) documented the following inadequacies in safety valves: certain valves were found with blowdown rings out of their required position; there is an industrial history of these valves on set pressure drifting; actual experience with safety valves in nuclear applications is that frequently they neither lift at the required setpoint nor reseal tightly without leaking; the variation of the setpoint from the requirements often exceeds not only ± 1 percent but also ± 3 percent; this is the first time that Unit 1 valves have been tested at their required temperature profile; preventive maintenance has not been performed on Unit 1 valves since 1984; exercising the valves has no useful effect on preventing valve setpoint drift and could result in failure to reseal and in seat leakage, damage to the valve seating surface, and ultimately erratic set pressure causing premature lift and failure to lift. (e) One of the authors of CRDR No. 1-2-0139 testified to NRC officials that the licensee falsified documents related to its request to revise the technical specifications.



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(f) A person told the petitioner that two investigators from the NRC Office of Investigations told her that they had documents demonstrating that licensee officials falsified documents related to the licensee's request to revise its technical specifications. (g) On October 8, 1991, one of the licensee's engineers willfully violated a safety-related procedure by intentionally adjusting PSV-574 contrary to the requirements of the procedure.

The request is being treated pursuant to Section 2.206 of the Commission's regulations (10 CFR §2.206). The petition has been referred to the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. As provided by Section 2.206, appropriate action will be taken on this petition within a reasonable time. By letter dated December 29, 1992, the Director denied the petitioner's request for an immediate shutdown of Units 1, 2, and 3.

A copy of the petition and letter dated December 29, 1992 are available for inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room at 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20555 and at the Phoenix Public Library, Business and Science Division, 12 East McDowell Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 29th day of December 1992.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Thomas E. Murley, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation



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