

December 8, 2017

Mr. Brian H. Whitley, Director  
Regulatory Affairs  
Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc.  
42 Inverness Center Parkway  
BIN B237  
Birmingham, AL 35242

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE REVIEW OF SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY'S REQUEST FOR LICENSE AMENDMENT (LAR 17-033) FOR THE VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT UNITS 3 AND 4: PASSIVE RESIDUAL HEAT REMOVAL HEAT TRANSFER AND IN-CONTAINMENT REFUELING WATER STORAGE TANK HEAT UP TEST ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA CHANGE (CAC NO. RP9705)

Dear Mr. Whitley:

By letter dated October 6, 2017, (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML17279B017), Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) submitted a license amendment request (LAR) 17-033 for the Combined License (COL) Numbers NPF-91 and NPF-92, for the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP) Units 3 and 4, respectively. The requested amendment proposes to depart from the in-containment refueling water storage tank heat up preoperational test described in the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR) Subsection 14.2.9.1.2, item h and the passive residual heat removal heat exchanger preoperational test described in UFSAR Subsection 14.2.9.1.3, Item g.

The purpose of this letter is to provide the results of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's acceptance review of the LAR. The acceptance review determined there is sufficient technical information in scope and depth to allow the NRC staff to complete its detailed technical review. 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 Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 50.90, 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 the 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.

The NRC staff has reviewed your application against the regulatory requirements and has concluded that it provides sufficient technical detail to enable the NRC staff to complete its detailed review and make an independent assessment regarding the acceptability of the proposed changes 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.

SNC has requested the NRC staff's approval of this LAR by September 28, 2018. The staff will attempt to support that date but it will depend on whether supplements to your request are needed. If the change is needed to support construction, please consider submitting a Preliminary Amendment Request.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-6582 or [Brian.Hughes@nrc.gov](mailto:Brian.Hughes@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Brian Hughes, Senior Project Manager  
Licensing Branch 4  
Division of New Reactor Licensing  
Office of New Reactors

Docket Nos.: 52-025  
52-026

cc: See next page

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