

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc.

Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 3 and 4

Resolution of Auxiliary Building Wall Thickness and Description Inconsistencies

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Exemption and combined license amendment; issuance.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued an exemption to allow a departure from the certification information of Tier 1 of the generic design control document (DCD) and issued License Amendment Nos. 103 and 102 to Combined License (COL) Nos. NPF-91 and NPF-92. 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, 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 asked for 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 exemption and amendment were issued on December 19, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2008-0252 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may obtain publicly-available information related to this document 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 Jennifer Borges; 301-287-9127; e-mail: Jennifer.Borges@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. 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 amendments and exemptions were submitted by letters dated December 14, 2016, and August 25, 2017, and are available in ADAMS under Accession Nos. ML16349A583 and ML17237C049, respectively.

- **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: Peter Hearn, Office of New Reactors, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-1189; e-mail: Peter.Hearn@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The NRC has granted an exemption 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 issued License Amendment Nos. 103 and 102 to COLs, NPF-91 and NPF-92, respectively, to the licensee. The exemption is 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 sought proposed changes to the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report and plant-specific Tier 1 information, with corresponding changes to the associated COL Appendix C information to address inconsistencies in the design thicknesses of the auxiliary building column line 1 wall and column line I wall, and the location description for the auxiliary building labyrinth wall.

Part of the justification for granting the exemption was provided by the review of the amendment. Because the exemption is necessary in order to issue the requested license amendment, the NRC granted the exemption and issued the amendment 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 request. The exemption met all applicable regulatory criteria set forth in §§ 50.12 and 52.7 of 10 CFR, and section VIII.A.4 of appendix D to 10 CFR part

52. The license amendment was found to be acceptable as well. The combined safety evaluation is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML17293A348.

Identical exemption documents (except for referenced unit numbers and license numbers) were issued to the licensee for VEGP Units 3 and 4 (COLs Nos. NPF-91 and NPF-92). The exemption documents for VEGP, Units 3 and 4, can be found in ADAMS under Accession Nos. ML17293A344 and ML17293A345, respectively. The exemption is reproduced (with the exception of abbreviated titles and additional citations) in Section II of this notice. The amendment documents for COL Nos. NPF-91 and NPF-92 are available in ADAMS under Accession Nos. ML17293A346 and ML17293A347, respectively. A summary of the amendment documents is provided in Section III of this notice.

II. Exemption

Reproduced below is the exemption document issued to VEGP, Units 3 and 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 December 14, 2016, as revised by letter dated August 25, 2017, the licensee requested from the NRC or Commission an exemption to allow departures from Tier 1 information in the certified DCD incorporated by reference in 10 CFR part 52, appendix D, as part of license amendment request (LAR) 16-033, "Resolution of Auxiliary Building Wall Thickness and Description Inconsistencies."

For the reasons set forth in Section 3.1 of the NRC staff's safety evaluation that supports this license amendment, 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, as described in the licensee's request dated December 14, 2016, as revised by letter dated August 25, 2017. This exemption is related to, and necessary for, the granting of License Amendment No. 103 [for Unit 3, 102 for Unit 4], which is being issued concurrently with this exemption.

3. As explained in Section 5.0 of the NRC staff's safety evaluation that supports this license amendment, this exemption 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. This exemption is effective as of the date of its issuance.

III. License Amendment Request

By letter dated December 14, 2016, as revised by letter dated August 25, 2017, the licensee requested that the NRC amend the COLs for VEGP, Units 3 and 4, COL Nos.NPF-91 and NPF-92. The proposed amendment is described in Section I of this notice.

The Commission has determined that the application for amendment 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 COL, 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 October 5, 2017 (82 FR 46537). 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 exemption and issued these amendments on December 19, 2017, as part of a combined package to the licensee (ADAMS Accession No. ML17293A341).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 26th day of March, 2018.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

/RA/

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