

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONTENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITYDOCKET NO. 50-259BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 1ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTINTRODUCTION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC, or the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption to Facility Operating License No. DPR-33, issued to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for operation of the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant (BFN) Unit 1, located in Limestone County, Alabama.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action is in response to TVA's application dated February 4, 1999, for a temporary exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 50.65 (Maintenance Rule). Specifically, this action would exempt TVA from the explicit scoping requirements of 10 CFR 50.65(b), and instead it would allow TVA to consider the defueled and long-term layup status of BFN Unit 1 when establishing the scope of TVA's Maintenance Rule Program. Structures, systems, and components (SSCs) that perform a required function for Unit 1 in its present defueled status or that directly support the operation of Unit 2 or Unit 3 would be included in the scope of the BFN Maintenance Rule Program, but Unit 1 systems and components not required to be operational would not be required to be included in the Maintenance Rule Program.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

10 CFR 50.65(a)(1) requires, in part, that, power reactor licensees shall monitor the

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performance or condition of SSCs against licensee-established goals to provide reasonable assurance that the SSCs, defined in 10 CFR 50.65(b), are capable of fulfilling their intended functions.

TVA requested the exemption to resolve a 10 CFR 50.65 compliance issue that was identified during an NRC inspection at the facility (cf., NRC combined Inspection Reports 50-259/97-04; 50-260/97-04; and 50-296/97-04, (IR 97-04) dated May 21, 1997). The issue relates to the acceptability of TVA's approach to addressing the SSCs required to be within the scope of the regulation as specified in 10 CFR 50.65(b). As a result of the inspection finding, the NRC informed TVA by letter dated July 30, 1997, that the scope of the BFN maintenance rule program for Unit 1 was not consistent with the requirements 10 CFR 50.65, and identified three options available to TVA to resolve the issue. One of the options identified was for TVA to request an exemption from the requirements of the rule that are not currently being met.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

No changes are being made in the types or amounts of any radiological effluent that may be released off site. There is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. The Commission concludes that granting the proposed exemption would result in no significant radiological environmental impact.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed exemption does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. The Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Alternative to the Proposed Action:

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (no alternative action). Denial of the exemption would result in no change in current

environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed exemption and this alternative are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement dated September 1, 1972 for BFN Units 1, 2 and 3.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

In accordance with its stated policy, on June 23, 1999, the NRC staff consulted with the Alabama State official, Mr. David Walter of the State Office of Radiation Control, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. Mr. Walter had no comments.

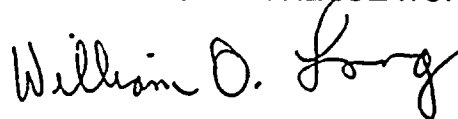
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon 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 this action, see the application for exemption dated February 4, 1999, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC and at the local public document room located at the Athens Public Library, 405 E. South Street, Athens, Alabama.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 29th day of July 1999.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



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