



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

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JUL 26 1979

Ms. Jame Schaefer, Chairman  
Radioactive Waste Management  
Study Committee  
LAKE MICHIGAN FEDERATION  
c/o 3741 Koehler Drive  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081

Dear Ms. Schaefer:

During the past months we have received several letters from you. Your letters of January 20, 1979 and March 18, 1979 were answered by us on March 8, 1979 and April 25, 1979, respectively. Your letter of April 29, 1979, asked a few additional specific questions about the reactors located on Lake Michigan and inquired about the status of our response to your earlier letter of March 18, 1979 (it was answered on April 25, 1979 and we assume you now have our response). A letter dated May 20, 1979, asked for information about the Big Rock Point facility and your last letter, dated June 21, 1979, transmitted a copy of your report regarding the status of spent fuel storage at six operating facilities near Lake Michigan.

Answers to the specific questions asked in your April 29, 1979 letter immediately follow:

- 1) Our records show that the number of spent fuel assemblies presently stored at Zion, Pt. Beach and Big Rock is 368, 212 and 86 respectively.
- 2) Neither Cook Unit 2 nor Palisades has refueled since January 1, 1979. Cook Unit 1 has just been refueled; 193 assemblies are now stored at Cook. A September refueling is planned for Palisades and a November refueling is anticipated for Cook Unit 2.
- 3) The licensee for Big Rock has proposed an increase in spent fuel storage capacity. Details are described later in this letter.
- 4) None of the plants along Lake Michigan have been given approval to operate the plant with a higher fuel burnup. However, approval has been given for the Zion Station to have a few test assemblies in the reactor that have higher burnup levels than the general core. Approval for this action concluded that there will be no significant affect on the spent fuel, the cladding or the pool integrity.

Your letter dated May 20, 1979, referenced data from an Operating Reactors Status Report and asked for a clarification of a written comment you received from DOE regarding the Big Rock facility.

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The Big Rock spent fuel storage pool initially had an authorized capacity of 120 assemblies. It was altered in 1967 and 1968 to permit 193 spent fuel assemblies to be stored. Due to oversight, the description of the pool found in the license was not changed at that time. In February 1979, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission amended the Big Rock license to correct the description of the pool to reflect the change made many years before.

In April 1979, the licensee for Big Rock submitted a proposal to increase the authorized spent fuel storage capacity from 193 assemblies to 441 assemblies. This proposal is presently under staff review. Copies of this proposal and any related correspondence may be found in the Local Public Document Room at the Charlevoix Public Library, 107 Clinton Street, Charlevoix, Michigan.

You also asked what the "will fill" date in the Operating Reactors Status Report is intended to mean. It should reflect the date the spent fuel storage pool can no longer accommodate a refueling discharge. Information found in the Status Table is based primarily on licensee submittals and unfortunately the dates do not always appear to be correctly determined. They occasionally appear to correspond to the date a full core reserve is lost. You may estimate your own "will fill" dates by assuming 1/3 to 1/4 of the fuel assemblies in a core are discharged at each annual refueling.

Thank you for your June 21, 1979 letter which transmitted a copy of your report on the status of spent fuel storage at the 6 plants on Lake Michigan. A cursory reading showed much factual information with only a few errors and these are of minor significance. We did note that some conclusions were biased by selected references and assumptions which support the conclusions presented. The subject of spent fuel storage is complex with many different viewpoints; therefore, the staff is preparing, and is about to issue, a generic environmental impact statement which will present a broad spectrum of facts, essentially those presented in the draft report. Perhaps after reading the final report, you may wish to modify your resolutions.

We hope this provides the satisfactory concluding installment of all your requested information. We appreciate your understanding of the causes of the delay in providing some of the information you requested.

Sincerely,

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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