



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

June 22, 1979

Docket No. 50-309

Mr. Robert H. Groce
Licensing Engineer
Yankee Atomic Electric Company
20 Turnpike Road
Westboro, Massachusetts 01581

Dear Mr. Groce:

By letter dated November 22, 1978, you informed us of a modified spent fuel pin storage concept which would increase the spent fuel storage capability at the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station. Your proposal contemplates implementing this concept in two phases. Phase one would involve compaction of spent fuel pins into modified fuel bundles which fit into existing storage locations. Phase two would be the increase in total plant fuel inventory at the Maine Yankee site above that equivalent to the 953 assemblies evaluated and authorized by License Amendment No. 11, issued October 31, 1975.

In your letter you state your determination that phase one can commence without prior Commission approval, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.59, and provide your evaluation supporting this determination. As discussed during phone conversations with your staff there are several areas of concern which may affect this determination. Regardless of the resolution of these concerns, we have concluded that NRC review and approval of all aspects of your proposed concept are required prior to implementation of either phase.

With respect to the spent fuel storage activities currently authorized at the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station, License Amendment No. 11, issued October 31, 1975 authorized modification of the spent fuel pool to increase its capacity to the equivalent of 953 existing fuel assemblies. It is our view that this quantity of spent fuel, which was reviewed in the Staff's Safety Evaluation and Environmental Impact Appraisal supporting a negative declaration bounds the amount of spent fuel that can be stored in the spent fuel pool. The purpose of your proposed modified spent fuel pin storage concept is clearly to increase the amount of spent fuel which can be stored in the spent fuel pool above the amount presently authorized. Such a change requires another amendment to Maine Yankee's license. Your suggestion that the concept can be considered in two independent phases would result in artificially dividing the action and is not acceptable.

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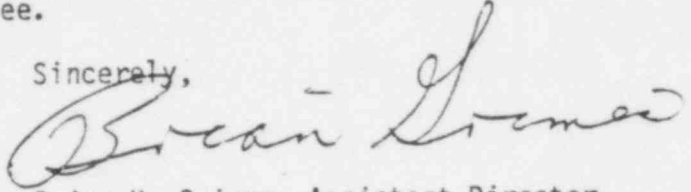
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Our review of your proposal would consider both phases of your spent fuel storage capacity increases. With regard to our environmental assessment, this is necessary to properly balance the net benefits and costs associated with the proposed spent fuel storage concept.

You are requested to inform us of your intent in this matter and, if appropriate, submit the required fee.

Sincerely,



Brian K. Grimes, Assistant Director
for Engineering & Projects
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cc: See next page

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Yankee Atomic Electric Company

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