

# Houston Lighting & Power Company

Electric Tower  
P.O. Box 1700  
Houston, Texas 77001

DOCKET NUMBER <sup>(57)</sup>  
PETITION RULE PRM-20-13(44FR11284)



NRC PUBLIC DOCUMENT

July 30, 1979  
NSL-48

Mr. Samuel J. Chilk  
Secretary of the Commission  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D. C. 20555

Attn: Docketing and Services Branch

Re: Victor E. Anderson Petition for Rulemaking  
44FR11284; Docket No. PRM-20-13

Dear Sir:

Houston Lighting & Power Company has reviewed the Victor E. Anderson petition for rulemaking proposing NRC certification of nuclear power plant health physicists. HL&P respectfully submits the following comments on the petition for your consideration.

While the petition proposes desirable ideals, the concept as presented is deficient in addressing the stated goals. The petition not only attempts to regulate degrees of competency, but also expands into regulation of corporate lines of authority. It should be noted that other professional requirements (e.g., the registered professional engineer) do not involve the individual having the authority to do essentially what he pleases. The petition, as presently worded, would give the health physics phase of plant operations near veto power over the plant owner's corporate management. In this respect, the petition strays away from the issue it attempts to address - producing qualified people and commitments. This goal currently is and will continue to be achieved by the nuclear industry. Continued compliance with the current radiation protection guidelines of 10CFR19 and 20 and consideration of the guidance of Regulatory Guides 8.8 and 8.10 will achieve this goal. Complex problems encountered in the design and operation of nuclear plants require the interaction of many disciplines with conflicting ideas. The resolution must balance these many factors. The current NRC guidelines requiring that health physics personnel be independent of operations or production-oriented groups provides assurance that health physics will develop input to problems and that the input will receive proper consideration.

In addition, the petition apparently desires to eliminate the phrase "health physics technician" from the power plant health physics vocabulary and replace it with what is perhaps the more prestigious title of "health physicist". This type of change will not affect the quality or competency of health physics personnel and appears to be only a self-servicing cosmetic device.

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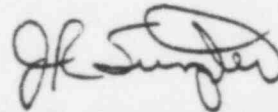
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The petitioner obviously does not have management experience or he would understand that competence, particularly in management, cannot be legislated. Certification, in fact, does not assure management capability whatsoever. A good health physics program can only exist if it has the full support and backing of company management. If it does not, then band-aid fixes such as certification, title changes, and other shotgun approaches such as suggested by this petition will not solve the problem. This basic lesson of management has been learned over and over again by those with experience in management.

If there are deficiencies in health physics programs today, the solution is to convince a company's management of the benefits and need for a strong program. Motivation of people assures success, not more regulations. Therefore, this petition for rulemaking should be denied.

These comments are offered for your consideration in the evaluation of the subject rulemaking petition. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



J. R. Sumpter, Manager  
Nuclear Department  
Generation Engineering

BAN/bk1

cc: R. D. Gauny  
J. G. White

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