

JUL 21 1976

Karl R. Goller, Assistant Director for Operating Reactors, DOR

RESPONSE TO TAR NO. ORB-1-241 WHICH REQUESTED AN EVALUATION OF A PROPOSED APPENDIX B TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION CHANGE FOR OCONEE NUCLEAR STATION

PLANT NAME: Oconee Units No. 1, 2 and 3
DOCKET NUMBERS: 50-269, 50-270 and 50-287
RESPONSIBLE BRANCH: Operating Reactors Branch No. 1
PROJECT MANAGER: Gary G. Zech
TECHNICAL REVIEW BRANCH: Environmental Evaluation Branch
TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: July 15, 1976
TAR NUMBER: ORB-1-241
STATUS: EEB Continuing

This memorandum is in response to TAR No. ORB-1-241 which requested a review of a proposed Appendix B Technical Specification change to the pH discharge limit for Oconee Nuclear Power Station Units No. 1, 2 and 3. We have reviewed the bases for the existing limits and find that the proposed change cannot be evaluated without further information. Before the evaluation can be made, the licensee will have to provide the information for an environmental appraisal. Enclosure 1 describes what is required.

The technical specifications, as they are now written, stipulate that "all water discharged from the wastewater collection basin shall have a pH between 6.0 and 8.5". This specification was based on our FES conclusion that the pH in the holding pond should be within the range of 6.0 and 8.5 (FES, page 95). The utility has requested that the upper limit on the pH be raised to 9.0. They state no reason for the change, except to say that it would be consistent with chemical effluents as stated in the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendment of 1972, nor do they describe the environmental impact of the change. Under the second memorandum of understanding between NRC and EPA, the NRC is obliged to review its technical specification water effluent limits with the objective of obtaining consistency with the NPDES Permit (Federal Water Pollution Control Act). This can only be done, however, after a NEPA review of the impact has been done, if the change warrants such a review. The FES for Oconee describes the pH of the Keowee River to be approximately 6.6 and the annual reports indicate the pH to be found in the range of 5.8 to 7.0, indicating the river is mildly acidic. The impact to the aquatic biota of water released at pH values higher than what naturally occurs in the river was not evaluated in the FES. The pH limits are already somewhat outside this range, thus an increase in the limit requires a NEPA review.

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This review was performed by W. Pasciak of the Environmental Evaluation Branch.

Original signed by
Darrell G. Eisenhut

D. G. Eisenhut, Assistant Director for
Operational Technology
Division of Operating Reactors
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Enclosure:
As stated

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DATE	7/20/76	7/20/76	7/20/76	7/21/76		

ENCLOSURE 1

INFORMATION REQUESTED - OCONEE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION CHANGE

1. Identify all important aquatic species populations which are intolerant to high pH levels and may be found in the area of the discharge; indicate data sources.
2. Describe the distribution and abundance of species identified in 1 above, and the sampling methodologies for determining distribution and abundance. Indicate confidence limits, and reference methods of estimating distribution and abundance.
3. Estimate the additional impacts to the species populations identified in 1 and 2 above. Describe methods used for estimating the impacts.
4. If data are not available for 1 and 2 above, propose a sampling program to collect the information and include this program in Section 4 of the Technical Specifications.
5. If the impact determined in 3 above is significant, propose a permanent environmental surveillance condition for inclusion in Section 3 of the Technical Specifications.