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

DESIGNATED ORIGINAL

August 31, 1982 Certified By J Hart

D507

Daniel Hirsch
Box 1186
Ben Lomond, CA 95005

In the Matter of
The Regents of the University of California
(UCLA Research Reactor)
(Proposed Renewal of Facility License)
Docket No. 50-142

Dear Dan:

This letter is in response to your letter of August 20, 1982 inquiring into service of certain NRC documents to you.

As you were informed during the August 25, 1982 conference call between the Board and parties, the Staff evaluation of the UCLA emergency plan is expected to issue by September 3, 1982.

As to my forwarding copies of I&E reports to you, you may note that I did not receive a copy of the I&E report 50-142/82-02 of the inspection on June 28-30, issued July 22, 1982, until August 23, 1982, at which time I sent you a copy. I did previously inform you that internal distribution of Staff and Applicant documents is time consuming due to the high volume, and that you should expect some delay in receiving copies.

As to your inquiry of possible NRC response to the UCLA July 8, 1982 reported event, I have received none and know of none that has been sent. Be assured that I will forward a copy of such response if and when I receive one.

Once again, I repeat, that you are being provided with all copies of NRC-UCLA correspondence as soon as they are received in my office.

I hope the above explanation will put this matter to rest.

On another matter, I am enclosing along with this letter, a recent Federal Register notice of Commission policy on development of LEU fuel for research and test reactors, which I believe may be of interest to you.

Sincerely,

Colleen P. Woodhead
Counsel for NRC Staff

Enclosure:
as stated

cc w/enclosure: Service List

OFC	:OELD	:OELD	:	:	:	:	:
NAME	:CPWoodhead/jh	:SATreby	:	:	:	:	:
DATE	:08/27/82	:08/30/82	:	:	:	:	:

FEDERAL REGISTER (EXPORT/IMPORT)—Continued

Name of applicant, date of application, date received, and application number	Material type	Material in kilograms		End-use	Country of destination
		Total element	Total isotope		
Mitsubishi Int'l Corp., July 21, 1982, Aug. 9, 1982, XSNMO1980.	3.25 pct enriched uranium	16,750	643	Reload fuel for OH-2	Japan.
General Electric Co., Aug. 5, 1982, Aug. 9, 1982, XSNMO0463(08).	3.85 pct enriched uranium	[1]3,734	[1]82	Increase quantity of material for Caorso reactor, extend date, add intermediate consignee fuel for Caorso.	Italy.
Total		126,585	9,066		

[1]Additional.

[FR Doc. 82-23045 Filed 8-23-82; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 7590-01-M

Use of High-Enriched Uranium (HEU) in Research Reactors; Policy Statement

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Statement of policy.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has licensing responsibility for domestic use and for export abroad of Special Nuclear Material, including High-Enriched Uranium (HEU), and is interested in reducing, to the maximum extent possible, the use of HEU in domestic and foreign research reactors. The NRC is pleased to note that the current U.S. Administration continues to support the Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors program and that to date the U.S. Congress has approved adequate funding for this program. In this connection, the NRC has prepared the following policy statement.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James V. Zimmerman, Assistant Director, Office of International Programs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, (301) 492-7866.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

In the 1950's the U.S. entered into several short-term agreements for cooperation (5–10 years) allowing for the export of research reactors and fuel under the "Atoms for Peace" program. In subsequent years the U.S. has been a major supplier of high-enriched uranium (HEU) for use abroad, primarily in research and test reactors. Such reactors produce radioisotopes for use in such areas as medicine, agriculture, desalination, research in biological effects of radiation, etc. Materials test reactors are also used to train future operators of commercial power reactors and to test new materials and fuels.

In the mid 1970's, particularly following India's detonation of a nuclear explosive device in 1974, nuclear proliferation concerns began to increase. Expanded efforts were undertaken to prevent nuclear power programs from being exploited to produce nuclear weapons. Particular concerns were expressed with respect to the proliferation risks associated with inventories of HEU for research and test reactors abroad. The widespread use of HEU fuel, which involved a large number of domestic and international fuel shipments, increases the risks of proliferation through theft or diversion of this material. In contrast to HEU, the use of fuel with lower enrichments reduces proliferation risks.

In an effort to allay concerns of proliferation risks, efforts were made to reduce HEU inventories, on the assumption that any reduction in the potential for access to these inventories would constitute a reduction in the proliferation risk. These concerns eventually led to the establishment of the reduced enrichment for research and test reactors (RERTR) program. This program was established to develop and demonstrate the technology that will facilitate the use of reduced-enrichment uranium fuels in research and test reactors. If successful, this could lead to a significant reduction of HEU inventories abroad, and thereby increase the proliferation resistance of related fuel cycles.

The objective of the RERTR program is to develop research and test reactor fuels which will allow substitution of uranium of low enrichment (LEU, less than 20%) for HEU and which will not significantly affect reactor performance characteristics or fuel cycle costs. On an interim basis, some reactors may utilize intermediate enrichment fuels (45%), while the LEU fuel development program is in progress. It should be noted, however, that no U.S. effort will be made to develop fuels with enrichments significantly below 20%, because of the increasing magnitude of plutonium production in fuels with very low or no enrichment.

To date, DOE has initiated a development and test program managed by the Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) to prove the feasibility of the new lower enrichment fuels. Many foreign countries are cooperating with the U.S. in this effort, and, within the past year, NRC has issued several export licenses for reduced-enrichment uranium to be fabricated into test elements for foreign and domestic research reactors.

Assuming RERTR program success, most of the performance testing of LEU aluminide and oxide fuels with high uranium densities for use in plate-type reactors will be completed by the end of 1984. The irradiation of pin-type zirconium hydride fuel with high uranium density for use in Triga-type, and possibly plate-type, reactors will be completed in 1983. Assuming licensing approvals, these fuels could then enter into full scale use in appropriate reactors. Silicide fuels with very high uranium densities are also being developed and tested by the RERTR program. These fuels may be needed for conversion of high power reactors.

As part of the overall RERTR program, Argonne conducts for DOE a technical and economic evaluation of each significant HEU export license application including the potential of the reactor for conversion to reduced-enrichment fuel within the planned availabilities of appropriate reduced-enrichment fuels. Nearly all potential conversion candidates have been evaluated. Technical conversion schedules are being planned by reactor operators based on demonstration and licensability of the fuel. Based on the technical and economic evaluation by ANL, a coordinated Executive Branch recommendation on the license application is developed by the Department of State and is submitted to the NRC.

The objectives of the RERTR program have been fully supported by NRC since its inception. The Commission has also utilized Argonne's analyses in support of its reviews of proposed interim exports of HEU, particularly with respect to determining the dates when conversion to lower-enriched fuels can be anticipated. The Commission is pleased to note that the current Administration continues to support the RERTR program and that Congress has approved adequate funding for the program.

The Commission also notes that several types of LEU fuel are currently being tested in DOE's RERTR program. As soon as all the necessary tests are completed, the Commission is prepared to act expeditiously to review the use of the new fuel in domestic research and test reactors licensed by NRC.

With respect to future export license applications for HEU, bearing in mind the Commission's responsibility to make an overall finding that each export would not be inimical to the common defense and security of the U.S., the Commission intends to continue its current practice of careful scrutiny to verify that additional interim HEU exports are justified. The Commission plans to continue to monitor the progress of the RERTR program so that it can understand what would be appropriate conversion schedules, and to encourage that actions be taken to eliminate U.S.-supplied inventories of HEU to the maximum degree possible.

The Commission notes that U.S. research reactor operators have shown little interest in converting to lower enrichment fuel. As part of a policy to strongly encourage conversion by foreign operators, the Commission will take steps [1] to encourage similar action by U.S. research reactor operators.

Dated at Washington, D.C. this 17th day of August, 1982.

For the Commission.

Samuel J. Chilk,

Secretary of the Commission.

[FR Doc. 82-23051 Filed 8-23-82; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-M

Abnormal Occurrence Report; Section 208 Report Submitted To the Congress

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the requirements of Section 208 of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has published and issued the periodic report to Congress on abnormal occurrences (NUREG-0090, Vol. 5, No. 1).

Under the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, which created the NRC, an abnormal occurrence is defined as "an unscheduled incident or event which the Commission (NRC) determines is significant from the standpoint of public health or safety." The NRC has made a determination, based on criteria published in the Federal Register (42 FR 10950) on February 24, 1977, that events involving an actual loss or significant reduction in the degree of protection against radioactive properties of source, special nuclear, and byproduct materials are abnormal occurrences.

This report to Congress is for the first calendar quarter of 1982. The report identifies the occurrences or events that the Commission determined to be significant and reportable; the remedial actions that were undertaken are also described. The report states that there were four abnormal occurrences at the nuclear power plants licensed to operate. The first involved diesel generator engine cooling system failures. The second involved pressure transients during shutdown. The third involved major deficiencies in management controls. The fourth involved a steam generator tube rupture. There were no abnormal occurrences for the other NRC licensees during the report period. The Agreement States reported no abnormal occurrences to the NRC.

The report to Congress also contains information updating some previously reported abnormal occurrences.

Interested persons may review the report at the NRC's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, NW, Washington D.C. or at any of the nuclear power plant Local Public Document Rooms throughout the country. Single copies of the report, designated NUREG-0090, Vol. 5, No. 1, may be purchased from the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161.

A year's subscription to the NUREG-0090 series publication, which consists of four issues, is available from the NRC-GPO Sales Program, Division of Technical Information and Document Control, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555. Microfiche of single copies of the publication are also available from this source.

Dated at Washington, D.C. this 16th day of August 1982.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Chilk,

Secretary of the Commission.

[FR Doc. 82-23053 Filed 8-23-82; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-M

[Docket No. 50-373]

Commonwealth Edison Co.; Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License

On April 17, 1982, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) issued Facility Operating License No. NPF-11, to Commonwealth Edison Company (licensee) authorizing operation of the La Salle County Station, Unit 1 (the facility), at reactor core power levels not in excess of 166 megawatts thermal (5 percent power) in accordance with the provisions of the license, the Technical Specifications and the Environmental Protection Plan.

The Commission has now issued Amendment No. 4 to Facility Operating License No. NPF-11, which authorizes operation of the La Salle County Station, Unit 1, at reactor core power levels not in excess of 3323 megawatts thermal (100 percent power) in accordance with the provisions of the amended license. In addition, the Amendment makes administrative modifications dealing with omissions, an addition and changes in the areas of exemption, reporting to the Commission, and completion date of equipment qualification; requires confirmation of vacuum breakers to withstand pool swell forces; and a license condition regarding HVAC systems with respect to operation above 5% and 50% power.

La Salle County Station, Unit 1 is a boiling water nuclear reactor located in Brookfield Township, La Salle County, Illinois. The amendment is effective as of the date of issuance.

The application for the amendment complies with the standards and requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's regulations. The Commission has made appropriate findings as required by the Act and the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR Chapter I, which are set forth in the amended license. Prior public notice of the overall action involving the proposed issuance of an operating license was published in the Federal Register on June 9, 1977 (42 FR 29576-29577). The increase in power level authorized by this Amendment is encompassed by that prior public notice. Prior public notice of the administrative changes authorized by this Amendment was not required since these changes do not involve a significant hazards consideration.

The Commission has determined that the issuance of this amendment will not result in any significant environmental impacts other than those evaluated in the Final Environmental Statement, its Addendum, and assessment of the effect 40 year license from issuance of this amendment since the activity authorized by the license is encompassed by the overall action evaluated in the Final Environmental Statement, its Addendum, and assessment of license duration. Further, with respect to the administrative changes in the Amendment, the Commission has determined that the issuance of this Amendment will not result in any

[1] Because the "steps" referred to in the above sentence have not been detailed or discussed, Commissioner Roberts does not agree to the sentence since it implies that a specific course of action will be followed by the NRC.