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VIRGINIA POWER

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David L. Meyer, Chief
Rules Review and Directives Branch
Division of Freedom of Information and
Publications Services
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Meyer:

**USNRC Draft NUREG/CR-5884 AND Draft NUREG/CR 6054
Request For Comments**

In the October 21, 1993 Federal Register (58FR54385), the NRC requested comments on two draft NUREGs on decommissioning costs for a reference pressurized water reactor. We have several comments.

We have reviewed the proposed comments on the documents prepared by the Nuclear Management and Resources Council (NUMARC) and the Utility Decommissioning Group (UDG). We specifically endorse the technical comments made by NUMARC. It is important that the technical issues that have been raised be resolved so that there will be general confidence in the methodology and the results.

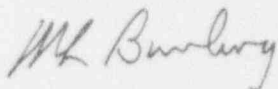
Additionally, we urge caution in any future regulatory action involving the current decommissioning rule. In that regard, we endorse the comments made by the UDG, which urge that the draft NUREGs be viewed in a proper regulatory context and that several decommissioning issues be addressed prior to any consideration of rulemaking. The first two issues raised in the UDG comment letter are of particular significance.

The UDG comments that the NRC should reiterate that the certification amount in 10CFR50.75 is not a cost estimate, but rather a minimum level of funding deemed appropriate to provide reasonable assurance of a licensee's capabilities to pay for decommissioning. To avoid confusion as to the regulatory significance of the updated decommissioning study in the draft NUREGs, the NRC should reiterate the purpose of the certification amounts in the current rule and the distinction between a cost estimate and a certification amount.

The UDG goes on to comment that the NRC should clarify its intended use of NUREG/CR-5884. The NRC should explain how the revised PNL study will be used and should consider whether the intended uses are appropriate. The NRC should explain what "licensee submittals" will be reviewed using this information. Licensees of operating plants have already submitted certification letters in accordance with 10 C.F.R. §§ 50.33(k) and 50.75(b). No further certification submittals would be necessary unless the decommissioning regulations were revised. While site-specific decommissioning cost estimates must be submitted at least five years prior to cessation of plant operations, it is not clear that it would be appropriate to use the Trojan-specific analysis in draft NUREG/CR-5884 to review those site-specific estimates.

In considering whether there are appropriate applications for the study, the NRC should be mindful of the difference between certification amounts and cost estimates. These two objectives are distinct and to some extent incompatible. While one objective of the study might be to add precision to cost-estimating techniques, such precision is not necessary in establishing minimum certification levels as used in the NRC regulatory framework for decommissioning.

We appreciate the opportunity to make comments on this subject. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact us.



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