



SACRAMENTO MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT P. O. Box 15830, Sacramento CA 95852-1830, (916) 452-3211
AN ELECTRIC SYSTEM SERVING THE HEART OF CALIFORNIA

MPC&D 94-020

April 7, 1994

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

Docket No. 50-312
Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station
License No. DPR-54

REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR 50.54(y)

Attention: Seymour Weiss

In accordance with 10 CFR 50.12 "Specific Exemptions" the District is requesting an exemption from the requirement in 10 CFR 50.54(y). 10 CFR 50.54(y) requires that the licensee action permitted by 10 CFR 50.54(x) be approved, as a minimum, by a licensed Senior Reactor Operator, prior to taking the action. In place of this requirement, we request that the authority to decide to depart from license conditions or Technical Specifications be placed with a Certified Fuel Handler (CFH).

Regulations

10 CFR 50.54(x) allows a licensee to:

take reasonable action that departs from license condition or a technical specification (contained in a license issued under this part) in an emergency when this action is immediately needed to protect the public health and safety and no action consistent with license conditions and technical specifications that can provide adequate or equivalent protection is immediately apparent.

NLI 1/0

9404120219 940407
PDR ADDCK 05000312
P PDR

10 CFR 50.54(y) states that:

action permitted by paragraph (x) of this section shall be approved, as a minimum, by a licensed senior operator prior to taking the action.

The underlying purpose of 10 CFR 50.54(x) is to allow plant personnel to take emergency actions in response to abnormal conditions that may not have been considered when the License Conditions and Technical Specifications were formulated. The underlying purpose of 10 CFR 50.54(y) is to ensure that individuals empowered to make decisions allowed by 10 CFR 50.54(x) are trained and tested on both the basis and importance of the Technical Specifications. See 48 Federal Register 13966 (April 1, 1983).

Background

On June 6, 1989, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District shutdown Rancho Seco permanently, as the result of a public referendum. Plant staff completed permanently defueling the reactor in December 1989. On March 17, 1992, the NRC issued Amendment 117 to the Rancho Seco operating license, modifying the license to a possession only license (POL). The NRC also approved the Certified Fuel Handler (CFH) training program which allowed the District to replace the 10 CFR 55 licensed operator program at Rancho Seco with the approved CFH training program. Senior Reactor Operators are no longer required at Rancho Seco. The non-licensed CFH position is the highest level of defueled plant operator, analogous to a licensed operator at an operational facility. CFHs are trained and tested on both the basis and importance of the POL and associated Technical Specifications.

Discussion

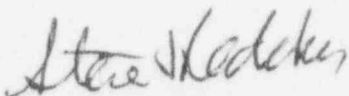
The District wants to maintain the flexibility provided in 10 CFR 50.54(x); however, it is no longer possible to meet the prerequisite requirement in 10 CFR 50.54(y). Allowing a CFH, in lieu of a Senior Reactor Operator, to approve taking actions allowed under 10 CFR 50.54(x) for a POL facility such as Rancho Seco will not present any undue risk to public health and safety, and is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule.

The District will ensure that it meets the underlying purpose of 10 CFR 50.54(y) by establishing administrative controls requiring that any emergency action permitted by 10 CFR 50.54(x) be approved, at a minimum, by a CFH prior to taking the action. CFHs will have the appropriate technical qualifications to carry-out licensee activities under the POL, and a Senior Reactor Operator is not necessary to approve taking action under 10 CFR 50.54(x).

Based on the above, the District has concluded that the requested exemption is justified, will not present an undue risk to the public, and is consistent with the common defense and security.

Members of your staff with questions requiring additional information or clarification may contact Bob Jones at (916)452-3211, extension 4676.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Redeker".

Steve Redeker

Manager, Plant Closure and Decommissioning

cc: L. J. Callan, NRC, Arlington