

PROPOSED RULE 2, 50+54
STATE OF ALABAMA (55FR 29043)

ALABAMA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
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October 12, 1990

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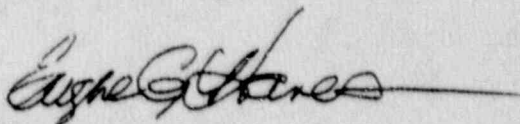
The Honorable Samuel J. Chilk
Secretary to the Commission
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Re: Nuclear Power Plant
License Renewal,
Proposed Rule 10 CFR
Part 54

Dear Mr. Chilk:

Enclosed are the Comments of the Alabama Public Service
Commission regarding the proposed rulemaking concerning nuclear
power plant license renewal.

Respectfully,



Eugene G. Hanes
Federal Affairs Advisor
Alabama Public Service Commission

EH/edj

Enclosure

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BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20555

NUCLEAR POWER PLANT)	Proposed Rule
LICENSE RENEWAL)	10 CFR Part 54
)	

COMMENTS OF THE
ALABAMA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Alabama Public Service Commission (APSC) respectfully submits its Comments in response to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) above referenced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking released July 17, 1990.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the Code of Alabama (1975), Sections 37-1-32 and 37-1-80, the legislature of the State of Alabama entrusted the Alabama Public Service Commission with the responsibility of overseeing the utilities operating in Alabama and ensuring that those utilities provide the consumers of Alabama with adequate, reliable service and that the rates and charges for the services provided are just and reasonable to both the utility and the public. The Department of Energy (DOE) is currently attempting to develop a National Energy Strategy that balances adequate supply at reasonable costs, while achieving objectives related to, among other things, environment and safety. An important element in the mix of energy

options that the APSC and DOE must consider is the nuclear power production element. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) now proposes to issue a rule that would allow nuclear facilities to extend their initial term of operations for twenty years by establishing requirements for renewal of a nuclear power plant operating license.

Electricity from North America's nuclear power plants makes a major contribution to the U.S. energy supply, while adding to the nations energy security, efficiency and environmental protection. In Alabama, through the latest period reported, nuclear power contributed 23% of the actual generated electricity. This electricity was generated under the close and exacting guidelines, standards, supervision and scrutiny of the NRC. It was produced safely and reliably at reasonable rates. Given the numerous benefits accrued, nuclear license renewal is an important option for the State of Alabama and the nation.

It is indeed appropriate and necessary for the NRC to establish specific criteria and standards for license renewal; for without this information, the utilities would bear an undesirable level of uncertainty and a lack of predictability in the plant relicensing process. In addition, this information is necessary so utilities may assess the costs associated with the renewal option. The costs must be bounded by reasonable rates and safe operation. One does not preclude the other.

II. THE NRC PROPOSAL TO DOCUMENT THE CURRENT LICENSING BASIS IS UNNECESSARY.

The Atomic Energy Act directs the NRC to ensure that nuclear power plant operation provides adequate protection to the health and safety of the public. The NRC has been adequately doing this job since Yankee Rowe was issued an operating license in 1960. Why should the utilities, and ultimately the ratepayer, have to bear the added expense of re-verifying the very same NRC regulations that they have been required to operate under? If the nuclear facility has not been operating in accordance with NRC mandates regarding health and safety, then it should not be in operation. At a minimum, the NRC should already be aware of failure to comply by a nuclear plant.

The main objective in the current licensing basis should be for the NRC to limit license renewal issues to age-related degradation. Each utility should be required to evaluate its current licensing basis at the time of renewal and provide public health and safety programs that revolve around the identified significant age-related degradation effects. This pinpoint approach would be less costly and time consuming than the shotgun approach of requiring a utility to identify and compile the entire current licensing basis.

III. CONCLUSION.

The APSC supports the development of a license renewal rule to continue the uninterrupted, valuable contribution that nuclear power makes to the energy mix. The APSC urges that an acceptable level of safety be maintained, while at the same time keeping economic feasibility of the relicensing process as a prominent criteria in the interest of the ratepayer. The current licensing basis approach as proposed is an unnecessary burden on the licensee and is overly broad in the method of documentation required. An age-related degradation approach would be least intrusive, while maintaining acceptable levels of safety.

Respectfully submitted,

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