

SAFETY EVALUATION

AMENDMENT NO. 12 TO LICENSE NPF-11

AND EXEMPTION FROM 10 CFR §50.44

LA SALLE COUNTY STATION, UNIT NO. 1

DOCKET NO. 50-373

Introduction

By letters dated November 18, 1982 and December 8, 1982, Commonwealth Edison (licensee) requested an exemption from 10 CFR §50.44 which requires after 6 months of initial criticality, an inerted atmosphere in the Mark I or Mark II type containment. La Salle County Station, Unit 1 has a Mark II containment, went critical on June 21, 1982, and will not be completed with its startup test program prior to December 20, 1982.

Evaluation

Inerting the containment for the La Salle plant is required by 10 CFR §50.44 (revised) and by the plant's Technical Specifications. In 10 CFR 50.44, "Standards for Combustible Gas Control System in Light Water Cooled Power Reactors," Section 50.44 (c).(3).(i) states in part that, "Effective May 4, 1982 or 6 months after initial criticality, whichever is later, an inerted atmosphere shall be provided for each boiling light-water nuclear power reactor with a Mark I or Mark II type containment."

Additionally, the currently effective Technical Specifications for the La Salle, Unit 1 plant includes a requirement for the plant to be operated with an inerted containment. However, provision 3.6.6.2 of these Technical Specifications (special test requirement) suspends the inerting requirement during the performance of the start up test program. This program is assumed to be completed when either the required "100% rated thermal power trip test" has been performed or the reactor has operated for 120 effective full power days, whichever is first.

Since La Salle County Station, Unit 1 achieved its initial criticality on June 21, 1982, the plant is required to be inerted by December 20, 1982, per the 10 CFR §50.44 requirement set forth above. The licensee has requested relief from the requirements of 10 CFR §50.44 but indicated it will be able to satisfy requirements of the plant's Technical Specifications. The licensee requested this exemption so that it may continue operating the plant with a non-inerted containment during the balance of the initial startup test program. The licensee proposes to comply with the requirements of the currently effective Technical Specifications (Section 3.6.6.2).

The reasons furnished by the licensee for requiring an extension of the initial startup test program beyond the anticipated 6 months are:

DESIGNATED ORIGINAL

Certified By W. J. Witt

1. NRC delay in granting permission to exceed 5% power due to investigation of certain allegations;
2. Inclusion of an extensive Safety/Relief Valve Test program;
3. Re-direction of Commonwealth Edison's resources to address certain allegations, as required by the NRC; and,
4. Current problems with the 1A recirculation loop discharge valve, which may require an extensive outage for valve repair.

It is a long established staff policy to permit the operation of boiling water plants during start-up testing with non-inerted containments. The high frequency of containment entries during this period of plant operations make it impractical to operate with an inerted containment. This matter has been reviewed and found acceptable in a number of prior cases. We find that such exemption in this instance is authorized by law and will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security and is otherwise in the public interest.

Accordingly, the licensee's request for exemption is approved to permit the operation of the La Salle County Station, Unit 1 with a non-inerted containment for a longer period of time as provided for in the Technical Specifications, Special Test Requirements 3.6.6.2. Specifically, the licensee is exempted from the inerting requirements of 10 CFR §50.44 until completion of the startup testing program pursuant to Technical Specification 3.6.6.2.

Environmental Consideration

We have determined that this amendment and exemption do not authorize a change in effluent types of total amount nor an increase in power level and will not result in any significant environmental impact. Having made this determination, we have further concluded that this amendment and exemption involve action which is insignificant from the standpoint of environmental impact, and, pursuant to 10 CFR Section 51.5(d)(4), that an environmental impact statement or negative declaration and environmental impact appraisal need not be prepared in connection with the issuance of this amendment and exemption.

Conclusion

We have concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that the exemption is authorized by law and will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security and is otherwise in the public interest.

We have also concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that as to the related license amendment; (1) because the amendment does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences or accidents previously considered, does not create the possibility of an accident of a type different from any evaluated previously, and does not involve a significant decrease in a safety margin, the amendment does not involve a significant hazards consideration; (2) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner; and (3) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations and the issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Date: DEC 20 1982