

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF COLORADO
FORT ST. VRAIN NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION
DOCKET NO. 50-267

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.45(b), 10 CFR 55.33(a)(2), 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2), (c)(2), (c)(3), and (c)(4) to the Public Service Company of Colorado (PSC or the licensee) for possession of the Fort St. Vrain Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1 (the facility) located in Weld County, Colorado.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action:

The proposed action would grant an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.45(b), 55.33(a)(2), 55.59(a)(2), and 55.59(c)(3) to the extent that these regulations require the use of a simulation facility in implementing operating tests and on-the-job training. Additionally, the proposed action would grant an exemption from 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2), (c)(2), (c)(3), and (c)(4) to the extent that these regulations apply to requalification requirements specific to power operations of a nuclear facility. By letter dated November 9, 1990, PSC requested an exemption from the above specified requirements of 10 CFR Part 55 related to the use of a simulation facility in implementing operating tests and on-the-job training. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is further proposing related action which includes an exemption from the regulations that apply to requalification requirements

specific to power operations of a nuclear facility. The NRC has proposed this related action due to its practicality and close relation to the intent of the licensee's November 9, 1990 request.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The requirements of 10 CFR Part 55 for a simulation facility are designed for operating power reactors. There are no plant-referenced simulator devices that reflect the current partially defueled and permanently shutdown condition of FSV. Likewise, the requalification requirements of 10 CFR 55.59 are designed for the complex operations associated with an operating plant from start-up through full-power operation. The licensee ceased power operation at FSV on August 18, 1989. In addition, the Commission issued a possession only license on May 21, 1991, preventing operation of the FSV reactor.

In the partially defueled and permanently shutdown condition, the principal operator activity will be to complete the defueling of the reactor and to monitor the spent fuel storage well to assure the continued safe storage of special nuclear material so that the public health and safety is not compromised. Additionally, the knowledge required of operators in a permanently shutdown status is far less than that required for an operating facility. The request for an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 55, as mentioned above, is based on the above plant conditions and the licensee's intent not to resume power operations at FSV.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The proposed exemption does not increase the risk of facility accidents because of the partially defueled and permanently shutdown condition of the

plant. With the reactor vessel partially defueled and the licensee not licensed to resume power operation at FSV, design-basis accidents associated with an operating plant from start-up through full-power operation are no longer credible.

In the shutdown condition of the plant, the principal operator activity will be to complete defueling of the reactor and to monitor the spent fuel storage well to assure the continued safe storage of special nuclear material so that the public health and safety is not compromised. This exemption would enable the licensee to continue to train its operators for their principal activities without a simulation facility and without expending excessive resources and time training personnel for unrelated power activities. The remaining requalification training to be accomplished without a simulation facility ensures protection of the public health and safety and is appropriate to the partially defueled condition of the plant. Design-basis accidents for a nuclear facility in a defueled condition are all associated with a loss of fuel storage well cooling or with fuel handling. The remaining requalification training to be accomplished without a simulation facility ensures protection of the public health and safety and is appropriate to the partially defueled and permanently shutdown condition of the plant.

Any potential post-accident radiological releases will not differ from those determined previously, and the proposed exemption does not otherwise affect facility radiological effluents or present any significant occupational

exposures. The proposed exemption does not affect plant nonradiological effluents and thus has no adverse environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no measurable radiological or nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Since the Commission has concluded there are no measurable environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption, any alternative will have either no environmental impact or a greater environmental impact. The principal alternative to the exemption would be to require a simulation facility and require requalification training geared to operating power reactors. Such action would not enhance the protection of the environment and would result in unnecessary expenditure of licensee and Commission resources.

Alternate Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of resources not considered previously in the Final Environmental Statement for the Fort St. Vrain Nuclear Generating Station.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

The NRC staff reviewed the licensee's request and did not consult other agencies or persons.

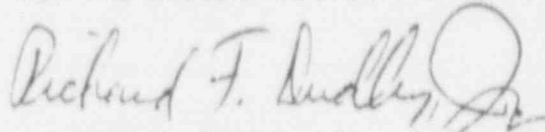
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the NRC staff concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's letter dated November 9, 1990, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20555, and at the Greeley Public Library, City Complex Building, Greeley, Colorado 80631.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 20th day of November 1991.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



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