

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)	
)	
VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR)	Docket No. 50-271
POWER CORPORATION)	
)	
(Vermont Yankee Nuclear)	
Power Station))	

EXEMPTION

I.

The Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (VYNPC, the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR-28 which authorizes operation of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station (the facility) at power levels no greater than 1593 megawatts thermal. The facility is a single-unit boiling water reactor (BWR) located at the licensee's site in Windham County, Vermont.

The License provides, among other things, that the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

II.

On November 19, 1980, the Commission published a revised Section 10 CFR 50.48 and a new Appendix R to 10 CFR Part 50 regarding fire protection features of nuclear power plants. The revised Section 50.48 and Appendix R became effective on February 17, 1981. Section III of Appendix R contains 15 subsections, lettered A through O, each of which specifies requirements for a particular aspect of the fire protection features at a nuclear power plant. Subsection III.J is the subject of the licensee's exemption request.

Section III.J of Appendix R requires that emergency lighting units with at least an 8-hour battery power supply shall be provided in all areas needed for operation of safe shutdown equipment and in access and egress routes thereto.

III.

By letter dated June 29, 1995, the licensee requested an exemption from Section III.J of Appendix R. In particular, the licensee stated that it cannot meet the requirements for emergency lighting units with at least an 8-hour battery power supply in the following areas:

- (1) A portion of general yard areas for access and egress to the Intake Structure, the Northwest Cooling Tower valve pit, and the fuel oil transfer pump building, and
- (2) in those areas needed for manual hookup of a portable fuel oil transfer pump.

The licensee proposes to utilize the security perimeter lighting for outdoor egress routes and one outdoor task. Based on the staff's review of the information provided by the licensee, the staff has concluded that, given that the security lighting is powered from a separate power source, the security lighting is not vulnerable to fire loss. The security lighting is inspected and maintained as part of the plant security requirements. The licensee has confirmed that the illumination levels in the affected areas of the plant are adequate to enable operators to implement the actions required for safe shutdown.

Therefore, the staff considers the licensee's alternative lighting configuration to be equivalent to that achieved by literal conformance with Appendix R to 10 CFR Part 50 and, therefore, meets the underlying purpose of

Section III.J of Appendix R. Therefore, the licensee's request for exemption from the requirements of Section III.J in the subject locations should be granted.

IV.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2), the Commission will not consider granting an exemption unless special circumstances are present. Item (ii) of the subject regulation includes special circumstances where application of the subject regulation would not serve the underlying purpose of the rule or is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule.

The underlying purpose of Section III.J of Appendix R is to provide adequate illumination to assure the capability of performing all necessary safe shutdown functions as well as provide illumination for required movements into and out of the plant. In lieu of the 8-hour battery powered units specified by Appendix R, the licensee has proposed using existing security lighting. The staff has reviewed the proposed alternative and has concluded, as described above, that the security lighting system would be a reliable alternative and would provide an adequate level of illumination to assure that all required safe shutdown functions and required personnel movements can be performed. Therefore, the staff concludes that special circumstances exist for the licensee's requested exemption in that imposition of the literal requirements of the regulation in these particular circumstances is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of Appendix R to 10 CFR Part 50.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a)(2)(ii), special circumstances exist in that existing levels of emergency lighting satisfy the underlying purpose of Appendix R to 10 CFR Part 50. Further, the staff has concluded that the requested exemption is

authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to the public health and safety, and are consistent with the common defense and security. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the exemption request from the requirements of Section III.J of Appendix R to 10 CFR Part 50 described in Section III above.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the issuance of this exemption will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment (60 FR 44088).

This Exemption is effective upon issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original signed by:

Steven A. Varga, Director
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this
30th day of August 1995

*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCE

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