

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of )

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY )

(Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, )  
 Unit 2) )

Docket No. 50-260

EXEMPTION REGARDING SCHEDULE FOR CONTAINMENT LOCAL LEAK RATE TESTS

I.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR-52, which authorizes operation of the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Unit 2 (the facility) at steady-state reactor power levels not in excess of 3293 megawatts, thermal. The facility consists of a boiling water reactor located at the licensee's site in Limestone County, Alabama. Two other boiling water reactors located at this site are not affected by this exemption. The license provides, among other things, that the facility is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

II.

Section III of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50 requires the development of a program to conduct periodic leak testing of the primary reactor containment and related systems and components, and components penetrating the primary containment pressure boundary. The interval between local leak rate tests for certain components (Type B and Type C testing) is specified by Sections III.D.2(a) and III.D.3 to be no greater than 2 years.

III.

By letter dated December 20, 1991, the licensee, the Tennessee Valley Authority, requested a one-time exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Sections III.D.2.(a) and III.D.3 regarding the periodic Type B and Type C local leak rate test schedule for 87 components at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Unit 2. The requested exemption would permit continued operation of the facility until its next refueling outage, which will begin no later than January 29, 1993. Otherwise, the required testing would require a plant shutdown no later than July 31, 1992, well before the end of the current fuel cycle.

IV.

Sections III.D.2(a) and III.D.3 of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50 state that Type B and Type C tests shall be performed during reactor shutdowns for refueling, at an interval not to exceed 2 years. The licensee has requested a one-time exemption from these regulations.

The 2-year interval requirement for Type B and C components is intended to be often enough to preclude significant deterioration and long enough to permit the tests to be performed during routine plant outages. Leak rate testing of the penetrations during plant shutdown is preferable because of the lower radiation exposures to plant personnel. Furthermore, some penetrations cannot be tested at power. For penetrations that cannot be tested during power operation, or for which testing at power would yield unnecessary radiation exposure of personnel, the Commission staff believes the increase in confidence of containment integrity following a successful test is not significant enough to justify the hardships and costs associated with a plant shutdown specifically to perform the tests within the 2-year time period.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that granting this Exemption will not have a significant impact on the environment (57 FR 24063).

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 10th day of June 1992

OGC  
*BMB*  
5/27/92

PDII-4/LA	PDII-4/PM	PDII-4/PM	PDII-4/D	DRPE:AD	DRPE: <del>AD</del>
MSanders <i>ms</i>	JWilliams <i>JW</i>	TRoss <i>TR</i>	FHebdon	Glainas	SVarga
5/15/92	5/14/92	5/18/92	5/29/92	6/10/92	5/29/92