



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

SUPPORTING AMENDMENT NO. 22

TO FACILITY LICENSE NO. R-95

DOCKET NO. 50-193

RHODE ISLAND ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter of December 5, 1996, the Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission (the licensee), requested a change to Technical Specifications (TSs) 4.1.1, 4.2.6, 4.2.7 and 4.2.8 to allow an extension of approximately one month to the time period to complete the annual surveillances of shim safety blade reactivity worth, shutdown margin, excess reactivity, and reactivity insertion rate, respectively. The extension is requested to (1) allow work that was backlogged while improvements in cooling loops were made, (2) allow a new reactor supervisor to observe the surveillances to help qualify for a Senior Reactor Operator (SRO) license, and (3) eliminate the need to repeat the surveillances to allow the new SRO candidate to qualify.

2.0 EVALUATION

The TSs 4.1.1, 4.2.6, 4.2.7 and 4.2.8 provide for annual (interval not to exceed 15 months) surveillances of reactor core reactivity conditions, as specified above. The submittal by the licensee showed that the values for these parameters were well within associated TS limits when they were last measured, and that there has not been any significant change in the values based on shim safety blade and regulating rod positions for critical conditions. The licensee also indicated that (1) operations between Christmas and New Years Day are not planned and (2) the surveillances will be performed as soon as possible in January 1997, so that there will be limited operations before the surveillances are planned to be performed.

The NRC staff finds that the previously measured conditions of the reactor showed a substantial safety margin in the surveillance related items (e.g., shutdown margin was 3.62% delta k/k as compared to the 1.0% delta k/k TS limit, and excess reactivity was 1.61% delta k/k as compared to the 4.7% delta k/k TS limit). Also, the conditions have not significantly changed and any significant change should be detected by reactor operators during criticality. Equipment condition has also been indicated to be acceptable through other surveillance activities such as the visual inspection of shim safety blades and the shim safety blade drop time measurements. The NRC staff also finds that operational observations such as unusual power or experimental response

or unusual core material conditions could also alert operators to potential anomalies. Further, there is no indication or reason to think that anomalies could occur. Finally, the licensee has requested this extension to enhance important training without unnecessary delay in time or use of equipment. Based on these findings, the NRC staff finds the licensee proposed extension to be acceptable.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

This amendment involves changes in a surveillance requirements. The staff has determined that this amendment involves no significant increase in the amounts, and no significant change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite, and no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, this amendment meets the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b), no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of this amendment.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The staff has concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that (1) because the amendment does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of accidents previously evaluated, or create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated, and does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety, 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 the proposed changes, 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 the health and safety of the public.

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Date: December 18, 1996