

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
REGARDING TERMINATION OF FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. R-117
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
LOW POWER REACTOR ASSEMBLY
DOCKET NO. 50-356

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of an Order terminating Facility Operating License No. R-117 for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (the licensee or University) Low Power Reactor Assembly (LOPRA) located on the licensee's campus in Urbana, Illinois, in accordance with the application dated February 10, 1995, as supplemented on April 24, 1995; October 2, 1996; and April 15, 1997.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action: By application dated February 10, 1995, as supplemented on April 24, 1995, and October 2, 1996, the licensee requested authorization to decommission the LOPRA in accordance with the proposed decommissioning plan. The application of February 10, 1995, also requested authorization to terminate Facility Operating License No. R-117. Amendment No. 6 to the facility operating license was issued on January 21, 1997, approving the decommissioning plan. The licensee informed the NRC in a letter dated April 15, 1997, that the University had completed decommissioning of the LOPRA in accordance with the amendment. The NRC project manager for the LOPRA and a non-power reactor inspector visited the site on May 7, 1997, to confirm that the licensee had decommissioned the LOPRA in accordance with the license amendment and had transferred the LOPRA components and fuel to the Advanced

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TRIGA Research Reactor (TRIGA) license (Docket No. 5J-151, Facility License No. R-115). Some components containing byproduct material were subsequently transferred to a University of Illinois byproduct materials license (License IL-01271-01) issued by the State of Illinois to allow the components to be stored at a facility away from the Nuclear Reactor Laboratory. No licensed material remains on the LOPRA license.

The University's Nuclear Reactor Laboratory houses the TRIGA (which the University continues to operate) and housed the LOPRA, which was located in the bulk shielding tank of the TRIGA. The Nuclear Reactor Laboratory continues to be subject to the terms of the TRIGA license. Because the LOPRA components and fuel have been transferred to other licenses and because the TRIGA continues to operate, no facility or site is being released for unrestricted use by this action. The licensee will maintain the capability to construct and operate a subcritical assembly in the TRIGA bulk shielding tank from the former LOPRA components, as currently authorized by the TRIGA license. The Nuclear Reactor Laboratory will be considered for release by NRC as part of the request to terminate the TRIGA license at some time in the future.

As requested by the licensee in its letter of April 15, 1997, the NRC, in a separate action, is considering granting a specific exemption in accordance with 10 CFR 50.12 to the part of the requirements of 10 CFR 50.82(b)(6)(ii) that requires a terminal radiation survey and associated documentation to demonstrate that the facility and site are suitable for release as a condition for license termination. Because all licensed material has been transferred from the LOPRA license and because the TRIGA and site will continue to be

under an NRC license, there is no facility or site to be released for unrestricted use as part of the license termination, and a terminal radiation survey is not needed to terminate the license.

The Need for Proposed Action: In order to end regulatory oversight of the LOPRA, Facility Operating License No. R-117 must be terminated.

Environmental Impact of License Termination: No licensed material remains under the authority of the LOPRA license. The NRC staff has verified that the LOPRA components and fuel have been transferred to the TRIGA license and to the University of Illinois byproduct materials license issued by the State of Illinois, which are authorized to receive this material. Future use of these components and fuel as a subcritical assembly is currently authorized and will be governed by the TRIGA license. With the transfer of all material to other licenses, the termination of the LOPRA license is administrative in nature. Because the site will continue to be subject to an NRC license, terminating Facility Operating License No. R-117 will have no effect on the status of the facility or site and thus, has no significant impact on the environment.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action: As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denying the proposed action. Denying the application for license termination would not change current environmental impacts and would require continuance of the facility license. The staff also considered taking no action on the licensee's request. This would have the same outcome as denying the proposed action. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and of the alternative actions are similar. Since the LOPRA components and fuel have been transferred to the other licenses that are

authorized to receive this material, there is no alternative with less environmental impact than the termination of Facility Operating License No. R-117.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: The staff consulted with the Illinois State official regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The NRC has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action. On the basis of the foregoing environmental assessment, the NRC has concluded that the issuance of the Order will have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this proposed action, see the application for termination of Facility Operating License No. R-117, dated February 10, 1995, as supplemented. These documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC 20037.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of July 1997.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



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