



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 15, 1997

50-321/366

Mr. H. L. Sumner, Jr.  
Vice President - Hatch Project  
Southern Nuclear Operating  
Company, Inc.  
Post Office Box 1295  
Birmingham, Alabama 35201-1295

SUBJECT: SCHEDULE FOR EXTENDED POWER UPRATE REVIEW - EDWIN I. HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M98795 AND M98796)

Dear Mr. Sumner:

By letter dated April 25, 1997, the Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc. (SNC), informed the staff of its intent to pursue license amendments for the Hatch Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, to allow operation at a new licensed thermal power level of 2763 Mwt. This proposed thermal power level represents an increase of 8 percent over the presently licensed 2558 Mwt level and follows the 5 percent "stretch power" uprate that was previously authorized on August 31, 1995. In its April 25 letter, SNC also: (1) provided a proposed scope of activities and related schedular milestones for the extended power uprate implementation, which included a request for the staff's approval prior to the Hatch Unit 2 outage in the fall of 1998 (i.e., about September 6, 1998), (2) proposed to submit the license amendment request by August 15, 1997, and (3) stated that the submittal will follow the guidelines of General Electric's (GE's) generic topical report NEDC-32424P.

Based on our review of the scope of your proposed submittal, the status of concurrent staff review efforts and our work priorities, we cannot, at this time, commit to complete the required review of your application within your requested schedule of less than 13 months. This determination is based on the following considerations:

1. The staff position paper on extended power uprates estimates that an extended uprate review will take about 18 months. The proposed Hatch review schedule is less than 13 months.
2. The staff's review of the GE generic bounding analyses (i.e., GE's generic topical report NEDC-32523P) has not yet been completed. Staff completion of this review is currently estimated to be around December 1997.
3. The staff's review of the lead plant extended power uprate review has not been completed. NRC approval of the lead plant application is a prerequisite to approval of any similar Hatch application. Staff completion of the lead plant review is currently estimated to be around June 1998.

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4. The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) will review at least the first extended power uprate, which is a prerequisite to completion of the Hatch review. Additionally, the ACRS review process normally includes a public presentation, and will involve participation from vendors, other involved licensees, the public, and the NRC staff. Resolution of public comments and comments from the ACRS can be time consuming and ACRS meeting schedules are somewhat uncertain.
5. The staff has not yet determined whether the implementation of a Staff Action Plan resulting from the Independent Safety Assessment of the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station will impact the currently anticipated review schedule for boiling water reactor extended power uprates.
6. Staff experience with three completed GE stretch power uprate reviews shows that the back end of the uprate review (from completion of the technical review to completion of the licensing action) took an average of 215 days and the entire review span averaged 665 days. There is less staff experience with extended power uprate reviews and they are potentially more complex than stretch power uprate reviews.
7. Power uprate reviews are not the highest priority licensing actions.

Based on the foregoing considerations, we cannot commit to complete our review of your proposed application within your requested time frame. We will, however, apply the staff's best efforts to review your application as expeditiously as possible, but our best estimate at this time is an 18-month review schedule, assuming a complete and technically adequate application with respect to both safety and environmental information.

If you have any questions about the above matter, please contact me at 301-415-1485, or Mr. Tommy Le, the Hatch Project Manager, at 301-415-1458.

Sincerely,  
 Original signed by  
 Herbert N. Berkow, Director  
 Project Directorate II-2  
 Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-321 and 50-366

cc: See next page

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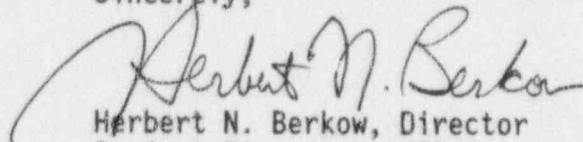
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4. The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) will review at least the first extended power uprate, which is a prerequisite to completion of the Hatch review. Additionally, the ACRS review process normally includes a public presentation, and will involve participation from vendors, other involved licensees, the public, and the NRC staff. Resolution of public comments and comments from the ACRS can be time consuming and ACRS meeting schedules are somewhat uncertain.
5. The staff has not yet determined whether the implementation of a Staff Action Plan resulting from the Independent Safety Assessment of the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station will impact the currently anticipated review schedule for boiling water reactor extended power uprates.
6. Staff experience with three completed GE stretch power uprate reviews shows that the back end of the uprate review (from completion of the technical review to completion of the licensing action) took an average of 180 days and the entire review span averaged 665 days. There is less staff experience with extended power uprate reviews and they are potentially more complex than stretch power uprate reviews.
7. Power uprate reviews are not the highest priority licensing actions.

Based on the foregoing considerations, we cannot commit to complete our review of your proposed application within your requested time frame. We will, however, apply the staff's best efforts to review your application as expeditiously as possible, but our best estimate at this time is an 18-month review schedule, assuming a complete and technically adequate application with respect to both safety and environmental information.

If you have any questions about the above matter, please contact me at 301-415-1485, or Mr. Tommy Le, the Hatch Project Manager, at 301-415-1458.

Sincerely,



Herbert N. Berkow, Director  
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Division of Reactor Projects - I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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cc: See next page

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Units 1 and 2

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