

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, ET AL.DOCKET NOS. STN 50-528, STN 50-529 AND STN 50-530NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENTS TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSES AND PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION DETERMINATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-41, NPF-51, and NPF-74, issued to the Arizona Public Service Company, Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District, El Paso Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Public Service Company of New Mexico, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Southern California Public Power Authority (licensees), for operation of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1, 2 and 3 located in Maricopa County, Arizona.

The amendments would revise the technical specifications relating to the design description of fuel assemblies to include assemblies containing a limited number of Zircaloy-4 or stainless steel filler rods, or vacancies, in lieu of fuel rods for use in reload cores. The proposed amendments were requested by the licensees' letter of April 8, 1988.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendments, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the request for amendments involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the

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facilities in accordance with the proposed amendments would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The Commission has provided guidance concerning the application of standards for determining whether a significant hazards consideration exists by providing certain examples (51 FR 7751) of amendments that are considered not likely to involve significant hazards considerations. Example (iii) relates to a change resulting from a nuclear reactor core reloading, if no fuel assemblies significantly different from those found previously acceptable to the NRC for a previous core at the facility in question are involved. This assumes that no significant changes are made to the acceptance criteria for the technical specifications, that the analytical methods used to demonstrate conformance with the technical specifications and regulations are not significantly changed, and that NRC has previously found such methods acceptable. The proposed change is similar to example (iii) of 51 FR 7751 because it would permit reconstituted fuel assemblies to be used during the next core reloading for each facility. The use of reconstituted fuel was developed by Combustion Engineering and is being implemented in other facilities similar in design to Palo Verde.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination. The Commission

will not normally make a final determination unless it receives a request for a hearing.

Comments should be addressed to the Rules and Procedures Branch, Office of Administration and Resources Management, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, and should cite the publication date and page number of this Federal Register notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 4000, Maryland National Bank Building, 7735 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Maryland from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Copies of written comments may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By May 18, 1988, the licensees may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendments to the subject facility operating licenses and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written petition for leave to intervene. Requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, will rule on the request and/or petition and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR Section 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) the nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to fifteen (15) days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than fifteen (15) days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter, and the bases for each contention set forth with reasonable specificity. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendments under consideration. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendments and make them effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendments.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendments until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issuance the license amendments before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendments involve no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish a notice of issuance and provide for opportunity for a hearing after issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch,

or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W. Washington, D.C., by the above date. Where petitions are filed during the last ten (10) days of the notice period, it is requested that the petitioner or representative for the petitioner promptly so inform the Commission by a toll-free telephone call to Western Union at 1-800-325-6000 (in Missouri 1-800-342-6700). The Western Union operator should be given Datagram Identification Number 3737 and the following message addressed to George W. Knighton: petitioner's name and telephone number; date petition was mailed; plant name; and publication date and page number of the FEDERAL REGISTER notice. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, and to Mr. Arthur C. Gehr, Snell & Wilmer, 3100 Valley Center, Phoenix, Arizona 85007.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendments which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public

Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., and at the Phoenix Public Library, Business and Science Division, 12 East McDowell Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 13th day of April, 1988.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



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