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

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

SUPPORTING AMENDMENT NO. 18 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-57

PUBLIC SERVICE ELECTRIC & GAS COMPANY

ATLANTIC CITY ELECTRIC COMPANY

HOPE CREEK GENERATING STATION

DOCKET NO. 50-354

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated September 2, 1987, Public Service Electric & Gas Company (PSE&G) requested an amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF-57 for the Hope Creek Generating Station. The proposed amendment would modify the Technical Specification rod block monitor (RBM) surveillance requirement to change the time when RBM channel functional tests to demonstrate operability of the RBM channels are desired to be performed.

Technical Specification 3.1.4.3 requires that both RBM channels be operable in Operational Condition 1 whenever thermal power is greater than or equal to 30% of rated thermal power. Technical Specification 4.1.4.3 requires that the two required RBM channels be demonstrated to be operable by performance of channel functional tests and channel calibrations at the frequencies and for the Operational Conditions specified in Table 4.3.6-1. Table 4.3.6-1 specifies the Operational Condition as Condition 1 with thermal power greater than or equal to 30% of rated thermal power and specifies the frequency for performing channel functional tests as within 24 hours prior to startup if not performed within the previous 7 days and also monthly. PSE&G proposes to modify Table 4.3.6-1 to require that the channel functional tests demonstrating operability of the RBM channels be performed within 24 hours prior to exceeding 30% of rated power if not performed within the previous 7 days rather than within 24 hours prior to startup. It does not propose to change the monthly test requirement.

2.0 EVALUATION

The licensee, in its request, expresses the view that the current requirement to perform the channel functional tests prior to startup is in disagreement with the operability requirement that the channels be operable at power levels equal to or greater than 30% of rated thermal power and refers to its proposed change as a "correction". The licensee states that its proposed change, which it describes as removing differing

sets of operability requirements, minimizes the potential for misinterpretation by the operator. It also states that by eliminating the requirement to test RBM's prior to startup and requiring instead that they be tested prior to 30% rated thermal power level, the proposed change will allow quicker startups.

We do not agree with the licensee that the current Technical Specification requirement to perform the channel functional tests prior to startup is in disagreement with the operability requirement and is incorrect. The current Hope Creek RBM operability and channel functional test requirements as specified in Hope Creek Technical Specification Sections 4.1.4.3 and Table 4.3.6-1 are consistent with the Standard Technical Specification for Boiling Water Reactors.

Since the RBM is not required to be operable until the power equals or exceeds 30% of rated thermal power and since both the current and the proposed Technical Specifications require that channel tests be performed to demonstrate operability of the RBM prior to achieving 30% of rated thermal power, both the current and proposed Technical Specifications provide assurance that the operability requirement is met. The proposed change, which would allow and require that the tests be performed closer to the time that the RBM system is actually required to be operational, is not expected to reduce the assurance that the system will be operable when required, and it may increase this assurance slightly. By removing the requirement that the tests be performed prior to startup and by allowing the tests to be performed after startup, the change provides greater flexibility in proceeding with the startup and a potential for reducing the time required to return the power following a shutdown.

On the basis of the above discussion, we conclude that this proposed change is acceptable.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

This amendment involves a change to a requirement with respect to the installation or use of a facility component located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20 and changes to the surveillance requirements. The staff has determined that the amendment involves no significant increase in the amounts, and no significant change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite and that there is no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. The Commission has previously issued a proposed finding that this amendment involves no significant hazards consideration and there has been no public comment on such finding. 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 Commission made a proposed determination that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration which was published in the Federal Register (52 FR 37552) on October 7, 1987 and consulted with the State of New Jersey. No public comments were received and the State of New Jersey did not have any comments.

The staff has concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, and (2) 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 nor to the health and safety of the public.

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Dated: August 29, 1988