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

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

RELATED TO AMENDMENT NO. 198

TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-16

GPU NUCLEAR, INC. AND

JERSEY CENTRAL POWER & LIGHT COMPANY

OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

DOCKET NO. 50-219

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated July 21, 1998, GPU Nuclear, Inc., operator of Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station (OCNGS) requested changes to the Technical Specification (TS) for OCNGS. The requested change would permit an alternative to the requirement to perform Control Rod Drive (CRD) scram time testing with the reactor pressurized before resuming power operation. Instead, the change would also permit: (1) scram time testing with the reactor depressurized before resuming power operation, and (2) a second scram time test with reactor pressure above 800 psig, before exceeding 40% reactor power.

2.0 EVALUATION

The Cold (Depressurized) Scram Time Test TS of 2.2 seconds at zero psig corresponds to about 3.2 seconds at 800 psig and 3.8 seconds at 600 psig. The current TS requirement is for the 90% insertion time average for all rods to be less than 5.0 seconds, with the reactor pressure above 800 psig. Therefore, the cold (depressurized) 90% insertion time acceptance criterion of TS Section 3.2.B.3 is met. Additionally, below 40% power, sufficient inherent margin exists to core operating limits (due to lower heat flux), to offset the potential impact of any slow scram time. Other considerations associated with cold scram tests are as follows. The cold scram tests will subject the CRD mechanisms to higher mechanical loads than a hot scram test and may cause the CRD buffer deal to wear or fail. This would result in difficulty in the ability to move the rod. However, the safety functions of the rod to insert on the receipt of a scram signal will be unaffected by this degradation. There may also be an increased risk of stub tube leakage with the cold scram test but, the integrity of the stub tube is verified by a 1000 psi hydrostatic test at every reactor start up.

The Hot Scram Time Test is the same as currently required by the OCNGS TS. The requested change allows the hot scram test to be done before reaching 40% power, instead of being required before startup.

The requested change will not increase the probability of occurrence of an accident previously evaluated in the Safety Analysis Report (SAR) or increase the consequences. The change will not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident. This change will not decrease the margin of safety as defined in the bases of any TS. There are no safety concerns

associated with the increased wear or possibility of leaks on the CRDs with the cold scram time tests. The safety function of the reactor, the ability to scram, will not be affected by these changes to the TS.

3.0 STATE CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, the New Jersey State official was notified of the proposed issuance of the amendment. The State official had no comments.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The amendment changes a requirement with respect to installation or use of a facility component located within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. The NRC 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 the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, and there has been no public comment on such finding (63 FR 43204). Accordingly, the 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 the amendment.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Commission 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, (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and (3) the issuance of the amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

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Date: October 1, 1998