



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

SAFETY EVALUATION FOR
EXTENSION OF THE LATEST CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION DATE
FOR WASHINGTON PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM'S NUCLEAR PROJECT NO. 3
DOCKET NO. 50-508

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55(b), the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS or applicant) requested an amendment to WPPSS Nuclear Project No. 3 (WNP-3) Construction Permit No. CPPR-154. By letter dated November 2, 1984, the applicant requested an extension to the currently specified latest construction completion date of January 1, 1985 to July 1, 1989. The letter stated that the applicant had delayed the construction of WNP-3 until an assured source of funding for continued construction could be obtained and stated that the reasons for the proposed amendment were beyond the applicant's control.

Subsequently, by letter dated March 10, 1986, WPPSS requested that its pending amendment request of November 2, 1984, be modified to reflect the latest construction restart date of January 1, 1994, as established by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and, therefore, requested a construction permit extension to July 1, 1999.

This evaluation examines the WPPSS reasons for construction completion delays to determine if the delays and deferrals were beyond the control of the applicant and if the requested amendment constitutes any significant safety or environmental concern.

DISCUSSION

The staff has evaluated the reasonableness of the following factors which the applicant has cited in the requests for amendment of the latest construction from completion date:

- (1) The temporary lack of demand for the energy to be produced by WNP-3;
- (2) The temporary inability to finance the continued construction from BPA revenues;
- (3) Recommendations of the BPA to WPPSS that the construction restart be delayed until 1994 due to the latest regional planning;
- (4) The allowance of a 54-month construction period to complete WNP-3 and a margin of uncertainties such as those associated with regional load growth or time to start-up the project to full construction making a revised construction completion date of July 1, 1999.

In the letter dated November 2, 1984, the WPPSS indicated that BPA made a decision that funds for the construction of WNP-3 would not be included in its fiscal years 1986 and 1987 or in its rate case for the period extending from July 1, 1985 to September 30, 1987. The BPA decision further indicated that preservation costs for WNP-3 would be included in the BPA budgets for fiscal years 1986 and 1987 to preserve the project as a viable option. The decision of BPA in this regard is based on its projections for further power demands in the region, which indicate that the electricity to be generated by WNP-3 would not be needed until the early 1990s.

BPA, which is charged with the responsibility of providing electrical energy to the Northwest region, is the designated recipient of all WNP-3 power output. Since BPA support is essential to financing WNP-3, factor 1 and 2 above are beyond the control of the applicant.

The third factor cites the need of additional extension resulting from a recommendation by BPA, for planning purposes, of a restart date for construction of 1994. This too is beyond the control of the applicant.

The fourth factor cites the need for extension beyond the construction restart date to allow for a 54-month period of construction and uncertainties such as those associated with regional load growth or time to start up the project to full construction, making a revised construction completion date of July 1, 1999. We have determined this to be reasonable.

The staff has considered the public health and safety significance of mothballing of WNP-3, which is approximately 75 percent constructed, and has reviewed (1) the WPPSS construction delay management plan (WPPSS transmittal dated August 5, 1983, to Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Region V), the Quality Assurance Plan (WPPSS transmittal dated September 31, 1987), and (3) the Preservation Program (WPPSS transmittal dated May 24, 1985), as revised March 6, 1987. These plans and programs have been accepted by the staff. The staff concludes that, since the applicant will meet the staff requirements regarding licensable maintenance of the plant and the site, and since the staff will exercise the inspection/enforcement functions, the proposed WNP-3 mothballing is not likely to result in any significant increase in the public health and safety risks.

It should be noted that WNP-3 is a deferred plant as that term is defined in the Commission's Policy Statement on Deferred Plants, 52 FR 38077, October 14, 1987 even though WPPSS did not apply for such a designation. The policy had not been issued at the time the application (on extension) was filed. WNP-3 is, therefore, subject to all applicable provisions of that policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The staff has also considered the environmental impacts of the extension of the construction permit, and has determined that the proposed action does not entail any significantly different construction activities from those which were considered in the Final Environmental Statement for WNP-3 (NUREG 1033,

dated May 1985). The staff, therefore, concludes that the proposed action will not alter the conclusions reached in NUREG-1033 regarding the environmental impacts and cost/benefit balances of construction of WNP-3. Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that extending the construction completion date will have no significant impact on the environment (53 FR 16799 dated May 11, 1988).

CONCLUSIONS

The staff, based on the above evaluation, concludes that the factors that have prompted the applicant to delay the completion of construction of WNP-3 were beyond the control of the applicant and constitute good cause for the delay in completion of construction under 10 CFR 50.55(b). Therefore, the staff finds that the requested amendment to the construction completion date is reasonable. The staff further concludes that the proposed delay will not result in any significant increase in public health and safety risks or environmental impacts. The only modification proposed by the applicant to the existing construction permit is an extension of the latest completion date. The extension does not allow any work to be performed involving new safety information of a type not considered by the staff prior to issuance of the existing construction permit.

Therefore, the staff finds that: (1) this action does not involve a significant hazard consideration as there is no radiological health and safety question involved here; (2) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by extension of the construction completion date; and (3) good cause exists for issuance of an order extending the completion date. Accordingly, based upon the foregoing evaluation, the NRC staff has concluded that issuance of an order extending the latest completion date for construction of WNP-3 is reasonable and should be authorized. The latest completion date should be extended to July 1, 1999.

Dated: May 16, 1988