



Public Service Electric and Gas Company P.O. Box 236 Hancocks Bridge, New Jersey 08038-0236

Nuclear Business Unit

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OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKING AND
ADJUDICATION STAFF

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Secretary
Washington, DC 20555
Attn: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff

DOCKET NUMBER
PROPOSED RULE **PR** 50
(63FR20136)

Dear Sir:

**COMMENTS ON NRC PROPOSED RULE ON IEEE STANDARD 603-1991
SALEM AND HOPE CREEK GENERATING STATIONS
DOCKET NOS. 50-272, 50-311 AND 50-354**

Enclosed are the Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) comments on the proposed rule revising 10CFR50.55a(h) as published in the Federal Register on April 23, 1998, 63FR20136 submitting a direct rule to amend the Commissions rules in 10 CFR Part 50.55a(h). The enclosed comments were provided to Mr. S. Aggarwal of the NRC via E-Mail on May 27, 1998.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Mr. Vic Fregonese at (609) 339-1607.

Sincerely,

D. R. Powell
Director -
Licensing/Regulation and Fuels

Attachment

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The power is in your hands.

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C Mr. H. J. Miller, Administrator - Region I
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
475 Allendale Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Mr. P. Milano, Licensing Project Manager - Salem
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North
Mail Stop 14E21
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Mr. R. Ennis, Licensing Project Manager - Hope Creek
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North
Mail Stop 14E21
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Mr. S. Morris (X24)
USNRC Senior Resident Inspector - Salem

Mr. S. Pindale (X24)
USNRC Senior Resident Inspector - Hope Creek

Mr. K. Tosch, Manager IV,
Bureau of Nuclear Engineering
PO Box 415
Trenton, NJ 08625

ATTACHMENT 1
PSE&G COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RULE ON IEEE STANDARD 603-1991

1. Endorsement of other referenced IEEE standards

Within the proposed rules published in the Federal Register as noted above, the NRC in its response to significant comment #1, PSE&G does not believe the NRC has fully addressed the outright endorsement of other IEEE standards. The statement that IEEE 603 - 1991 does not imply endorsement of later versions of IEEE Standards is not technically substantiated within the proposed rule by the NRC if IEEE 603 - 1991 is to be endorsed by rule and not regulatory guidance. The NRC states that it did not seek for any other standards referenced in IEEE 603 - 1991 to be approved for incorporation by reference, even going so far as to state the referenced standards in IEEE 603 - 1991 are not mandatory requirements, although IEEE 603 - 1991 invokes the referenced standards by the use of "shall". PSE&G believes the NRC position has not been clarified due to "shall" in the IEEE 603 -1991 standard; once IEEE 603 -1991 becomes part of 10 CFR 50.55a , then IEEE 603 -1991 becomes part of the license commitment.

2. Definition of System Level Replacement

The term "system level" replacement is not clearly defined and likely cannot specifically be established regarding what constitutes a system-level replacement versus an upgrade or modification to components and subsystems. The proposed NRC interpretation would require compliance with IEEE-603 -1991 for system level replacement/upgrades of protection systems/subsystems that require replacement due to age or obsolescence. Currently, this can be performed under 10CFR50.59 guidance, using design criteria (IEEE standards and Reg Guides) that are part of the plants design and licensing basis. Imposition of IEEE-603 - 1991 in this situation appears to be a backfit. The NRC's perceived impact of incorporating IEEE-603 in this manner is understated.

3. IEEE 603 - 1991 Industry Acceptance

PSE&G disagrees that IEEE-603 and RG 1.153 represent a general public consensus position. The NRC's statement that they believe the RG was appropriate due to lack of negative comment on the draft RG (proposing to endorse IEEE 603 -1991) should have considered that the majority of operating plants are not required to meet IEEE-603 -1991 or RG 1.153. The lack of adverse comments (to the draft RG) should not have been construed as an endorsement of IEEE 603 -1991.