

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS
UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 5, 1958

Honorable John A. McCone
Chairman, U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

Subject: GENERAL ELECTRIC VALLECITOS BOILING WATER REACTOR (GE-VBWR)

Dear Mr. McCone:

The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards at its Ninth Meeting on August 4, 1958, considered Amendment No. 24 to the License Application of the General Electric Company for the operation of the Vallecitos Boiling Water Reactor. This amendment is designed to provide the operator with greater latitude in the choice of fuel elements and operating limits. In reviewing the amendment application the Committee considered the supporting material submitted in the reports referenced below and held a meeting with representatives of the applicant and members of the Hazards Evaluation Branch.

The Committee believes that the technical specifications set out in Section 1 of Amendment No. 24 define a scope of operations within which it is possible to operate without undue hazard to the public. This belief is based on the assumption that the specifications outlined do not affect the magnitude of the postulated maximum credible accident, which the applicant has shown does not result in the release of dangerous amounts of radioactivity beyond the site boundary provided the container maintains its specified leak tightness. While, as stated, it is the Committee's belief that the proposed technical limitations have no influence on the magnitude of the maximum credible accident, this has not in fact been clearly demonstrated by the applicant, and we believe this point should be documented more definitely.

On the other hand, the Committee would like to emphasize that the technical specifications alone do not guarantee the safe operation of the reactor, especially from the standpoint of hazards within the boundaries of the site.

The Committee is concerned with the mounting number of amendments to the licensee's application on the VBWR operation which apparently stems from attempts to cover a multiplicity of specific situations

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pertinent to the safe operation of the reactor. Rather than improving the safety it seems possible that the real issues of safe operation may get beclouded by changing one set of circumstances for another.

The Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards suggests that the applicant be permitted within the scope of Amendment No. 24 to assume technical responsibility concerning hazards in connection with his experimental program.

The latitude contemplated in the proposed amendment imposes a special responsibility on the applicant to review each proposed change in operating conditions in the light of its effect on the probability of an accident and on the possible severity of the accident if it occurs.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ C. Rogers McCullough

C. Rogers McCullough
Chairman

cc: Paul F. Foster, GM
H. L. Price, DL&R

References:

- 1) Amendment No. 24 to License Application for Vallecitor Boiling Water Reactor, May 14, 1958.
- 2) SG-VAL-2, Second Edition, Final Hazards Summary Report, May 8, 1958.
- 3) Key to Second Edition of SG-VAL-2, May 8, 1958.
- 4) Report to ACRS by Division of Licensing and Regulation on GE-VBWR, August 1, 1958.