

November 4, 1999

Mr. Nathan L. Haskell
Director, Licensing
Palisades Plant
27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway
Covert, MI 49403

SUBJECT: PALISADES PLANT - PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT
TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE (TAC NO. MA7000)

Dear Mr. Haskell:

The enclosed announcement was forwarded to the Herald-Palladium for publication. This announcement relates to your application dated October 29, 1999, as supplemented November 2, 1999, for amendment to the Facility Operating License No. DPR-20. The proposed amendment would modify the Technical Specifications (TSs) to revise administrative controls to reflect changes in analyses and design methodologies for the next operating cycle that must be incorporated prior to taking the reactor critical following completion of the current refueling outage.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Brenda Mozafari for:
Robert G. Schaaf, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-255

Enclosure: Public Notice

cc w/encl: See next page

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

November 4, 1999

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Director, Licensing
Palisades Plant
27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway
Covert, MI 49403

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Mozafari for".

Robert G. Schaaf, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate III
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-255

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Palisades Plant

cc:

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Site Vice President
Palisades Plant
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Covert, MI 49043

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Nuclear, Fossil, and Hydro Operations
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Michigan Department of
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Lansing, MI 48909-8130

Michigan Department of Attorney General
Special Litigation Division
630 Law Building
P.O. Box 30212
Lansing, MI 48909

November 1999

PUBLIC NOTICE
NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO AMEND OPERATING LICENSE FOR THE
PALISADES PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has received an application dated October 29, 1999, as supplemented November 2, 1999, from the Consumers Energy Company (the licensee) for an exigent amendment to the operating license for the Palisades Plant, located in Van Buren County, Michigan.

The proposed amendment is being processed on an exigent basis to avoid an unnecessary delay in the startup of the Palisades facility from the ongoing refueling outage. If approved, this amendment would revise administrative controls regarding the containment leak rate testing program and the core operating limits report. These changes are necessary to reflect changes in the accident analyses and core design methodologies for the next operating cycle.

The licensee and the NRC have evaluated the proposed change with regard to the determination of whether or not a significant hazards consideration is involved. According to 10 CFR 50.92(c), this means that operation of Palisades in accordance with the proposed amendment would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated, would not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated, or involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The licensee's evaluation is presented below:

- A. Does the TS [Technical Specification] 6.5.14 P_a Revision:
 - a. Involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed change to the calculated peak calculated [sic] containment internal pressure for the design basis loss of coolant accident, P_a , does not alter the assumed initiators to any analyzed event. The probability of an accident previously evaluated will not be increased by this proposed change.

The Containment Leak Rate Testing Program limits containment leakage to 0.1% of the containment air weight per day with containment pressure at P_a . Since all Palisades radiological consequence analyses are performed assuming design containment pressure (55 psig), the change in P_a will not cause the containment leakage to be above the design value of 0.1% at 55 psig. The consequences of an accident previously evaluated will not be increased by this proposed change.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed change to TS section 6.5.14 would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

- b. Create the possibility of a new different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated

The proposed change provides a higher peak calculated containment internal pressure for the design basis loss of coolant accident than currently exists in the TS. This change is a result [of] a change to the coatings used on internal containment surfaces. The change does not involve any alteration in the plant configuration (no new or different type of equipment will be installed) or make changes in the methods governing normal plant operation. The change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed change to TS section 6.5.14 would not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously evaluated.

- c. Involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety

The peak calculated containment pressure remains below the containment design pressure of 55 psig. Since all Palisades radiological consequence analyses are performed assuming design containment pressure (55 psig), a change in the peak calculated containment internal pressure of 0.36 psi does not represent a significant change in the margin of safety.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed change to TS section 6.5.14 does not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

- B. Does the TS 6.6.5 Methodology List Revision:

- a. Involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed change to the list of methodology documents in Specification 6.6.5 would not increase the probability or consequence of an accident previously evaluated. Accidents previously evaluated will be

unaffected by changes in methodology references because they were analyzed using approved methods. The results of these event analyses met their respective acceptance criteria.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed change to the Technical Specifications would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

- b. Create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously evaluated.

The proposed change to the list of methodology documents in Specification 6.6.5 would not create the possibility of a new or different accident than previously analyzed. The proposed change only changes the approved methodology documents. All accidents remain analyzed using approved methodologies.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed change to the Technical Specifications would not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously evaluated.

- c. Involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The proposed change to the list of methodology documents in Specification 6.6.5 would not reduce the margin of safety. Because all analyses [sic] use approved methodologies and their results satisfy their respective acceptance criteria, the margin of safety is not reduced.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed change to the Technical Specifications would not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Following an initial review of this application, the requested amendment has been evaluated against the standards of 10 CFR 50.92 and the NRC staff has made a proposed (preliminary) determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. The changes do not significantly increase the probability or consequences of any previously evaluated accident, nor create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident, nor significantly reduce any margin of safety.

If the proposed determination that the requested license amendment involves no significant hazards consideration becomes final, the staff will issue the amendment without first

offering an opportunity for a public hearing. An opportunity for a hearing will be published in the Federal Register at a later date and any hearing request will not delay the effective date of the amendment.

If the staff decides in its final determination that the amendment does involve a significant hazards consideration, a notice of opportunity for a prior hearing will be published in the Federal Register and, if a hearing is granted, it will be held before the amendment is issued.

Comments on the proposed determination of no significant hazards consideration may be (1) telephoned to Claudia M. Craig, Section Chief, Project Directorate III, by collect call to 1-301-415-1389, or by facsimile to 1-301-415-3061, (2) e-mailed to CMC1@NRC.GOV, or (3) submitted in writing to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. All comments received by close of business on November 12, 1999, including all telephoned or e-mailed comments received by 4:15 p.m. eastern standard time on November 12, 1999, will be considered in reaching a final determination.

A copy of the application is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, located at the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and accessible electronically through the ADAMS Public Electronic Reading Room link at the NRC Web site (<http://www.nrc.gov>).