

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-382]

Entergy Operations, Inc.; Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License and Opportunity for a Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF-38, issued to Entergy Operations, Inc. (the licensee), for operation of the Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3, located in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana.

The proposed amendment would increase the maximum authorized power level from 3441 megawatts thermal (MWt) to 3716 MWt. This change represents an increase of approximately 8 percent above the current licensed power. The proposed amendment would also change the operating license and the technical specifications appended to the operating license to provide for implementing updated power operation.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), and the Commission's regulations.

By March 8, 2004, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license, and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714, which is available at the Commission's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland, or electronically on the Internet at the NRC Web site <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/cfr>. If there are problems in accessing the document, contact the PDR Reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board,

designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel will rule on the request and/or petition; and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition must specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) The nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order that may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition must also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene that must include a list of the contentions that the petitioner seeks to have litigated in the hearing. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of each contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion that support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. The petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a genuine dispute exists with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters under the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one that, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A

petitioner who fails to file such a supplement that satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

A request for a hearing and petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's PDR, located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland, by the above date. Because of continuing disruptions in delivery of mail to United States Government offices, it is requested that petitions for leave to intervene and requests for hearing be transmitted to the Secretary of the Commission either by means of facsimile transmission to 301-415-1101 or by e-mail to hearingdocket@nrc.gov. A copy of the request for hearing and petition for leave to intervene should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and because of continuing disruptions in delivery of mail to United States Government offices, it is requested that copies be transmitted either by means of facsimile transmission to 301-415-3725 or by e-mail to OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov. A copy of the request for hearing and petition for leave to intervene should also be sent to N.S. Reynolds, Esquire, Winston & Strawn, 1400 L Street NW., Washington, DC 20037-1128, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for a hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer, or the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

If a request for a hearing is received, the Commission's staff may issue the amendment after it completes its technical review and prior to the completion of any required hearing if it publishes a further notice for public comment of its proposed finding of no significant hazards consideration in

accordance with 10 CFR 50.91 and 50.92.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated November 13, 2003, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's PDR, located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System's (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 28th day of January 2004.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Nageswaran Kalyanam,

Project Manager, Section 1, Project Directorate IV, Division of Licensing Project Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-275 and 50-323]

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit Nos. 1 and 2; Exemption

1.0 Background

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License Nos. DPR-80 and DPR-82, which authorize operation of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (facility or DCPP), Unit Nos. 1 and 2, respectively. The licenses provide, among other things, that the facility is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC, the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

The facility consists of two pressurized water reactors located in San Luis Obispo County, California.

2.0 Request/Action

Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), part 50, § 50.68(b)(1) sets forth the following requirement that must be met, in lieu of a monitoring system capable of detecting criticality events.

Plant procedures shall prohibit the handling and storage at any one time of more fuel assemblies than have been determined to be safely subcritical under the most adverse moderation conditions feasible by unborated water.

The licensee is unable to satisfy the above requirement for handling of the 10 CFR part 72 licensed contents of the Holtec HI-STORM 100 Cask System. Section 50.12(a) allows licensees to apply for an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR part 50 if the regulation is not necessary to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule and other conditions are met. The licensee stated in the application that compliance with 10 CFR 50.68(b)(1) is not necessary for handling the 10 CFR Part 72 licensed contents of the cask system to achieve the underlying purpose of the rule.

3.0 Discussion

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12, the Commission may, upon application by any interested person or upon its own initiative, grant exemptions from the requirements of 10 CFR part 50 when (1) the exemptions are authorized by law, will not present an undue risk to public health or safety, and are consistent with the common defense and security; and (2) when special circumstances are present. Therefore, in determining the acceptability of the licensee's exemption request, the staff has performed the following regulatory, technical, and legal evaluations to satisfy the requirements of 10 CFR 50.12 for granting the exemption.

3.1 Regulatory Evaluation

The DCPP Technical Specifications (TS) currently permit the licensee to store spent fuel assemblies in high-density storage racks in each spent fuel pool (SFP). In accordance with the provisions of 10 CFR 50.68(b)(4), the licensee takes credit for soluble boron for criticality control and ensures that the effective multiplication factor (k_{eff}) of the SFP does not exceed 0.95, if flooded with borated water. 10 CFR 50.68(b)(4) also requires that if credit is taken for soluble boron, the k_{eff} must remain below 1.0 (subcritical), if flooded with unborated water. However, the licensee is unable to satisfy the requirement to maintain the k_{eff} below 1.0 (subcritical) with unborated water, which is also the requirement of 10 CFR 50.68(b)(1). Therefore, the licensee's request for exemption from 10 CFR 50.68(b)(1) proposes to permit the licensee to perform spent fuel loading, unloading, and handling operations related to dry cask storage, without being subcritical under the most adverse

moderation conditions feasible by unborated water.

Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 50, Appendix A, "General Design Criteria (GDC) for Nuclear Power Plants," provides a list of the minimum design requirements for nuclear power plants. According to GDC 62, "Prevention of criticality in fuel storage and handling," the licensee must limit the potential for criticality in the fuel handling and storage system by physical systems or processes.

Section 50.68 of 10 CFR part 50, "Criticality accident requirements," provides the NRC requirements for maintaining subcritical conditions in SFPs. Section 50.68 provides criticality control requirements which, if satisfied, ensure that an inadvertent criticality in the SFP is an extremely unlikely event. These requirements ensure that the licensee has appropriately conservative criticality margins during handling and storage of spent fuel. Section 50.68(b)(1) states, "Plant procedures shall prohibit the handling and storage at any one time of more fuel assemblies than have been determined to be safely subcritical under the most adverse moderation conditions feasible by unborated water." Specifically, 10 CFR 50.68(b)(1) ensures that the licensee will maintain the pool in a subcritical condition during handling and storage operations without crediting the soluble boron in the SFP water.

The licensee has submitted a license application to construct and operate an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at DCPP. The ISFSI would permit the licensee to store spent fuel assemblies in large concrete dry storage casks. In order to transfer the spent fuel assemblies from the SFP to the dry storage casks, the licensee must first transfer the assemblies to a Multi-Purpose Canister (MPC) in the cask pit area of the SFP. The licensee performed criticality analyses of the MPC fully loaded with fuel having the highest permissible reactivity, and determined that a soluble boron credit was necessary to ensure that the MPC would remain subcritical in the SFP. Since the licensee is unable to satisfy the requirement of 10 CFR 50.68(b)(1) to ensure subcritical conditions during handling and storage of spent fuel assemblies in the pool with unborated water, the licensee identified the need for an exemption from the 10 CFR 50.68(b)(1) requirement to support MPC loading, unloading, and handling operations, without being subcritical under the most adverse moderation conditions feasible by unborated water.

The staff evaluated the possibility of an inadvertent criticality of the spent