

4. Less restrictive requirements, which are relaxations of corresponding requirements in the existing Calvert Cliffs TS that provide little or no safety benefit and place unnecessary burdens on the licensee. These relaxations were the result of generic NRC actions or other analyses. They have been justified on a case-by-case basis for Calvert Cliffs as will be described in the staff's Safety Evaluation to be issued with the license amendment which will be noticed in the **Federal Register**.

In addition to the changes described above, the licensee proposed certain changes to the existing TS that deviated from the STS in NUREG-1432. These additional proposed changes are described in the licensee's application and in the staff's Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License and Opportunity for a Hearing (62 FR 4816). Where these changes represent a change to the current licensing basis for Calvert Cliffs, they have been justified on a case-by-case basis and will be described in the staff's Safety Evaluation to be issued with the license amendment.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed TS conversion would not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and would not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents.

Changes that are administrative in nature have been found to have no effect on the technical content of the TS, and are acceptable. The increased clarity and understanding these changes bring to the TS are expected to improve the operator's control of the plant in normal and accident conditions.

Relocation of requirements to licensee-controlled documents does not change the requirements themselves. Future changes to these requirements may be made by the licensee under 10 CFR 50.59 or other NRC-approved control mechanisms, which ensures continued maintenance of adequate requirements. All such relocations have been found to be in conformance with the guidelines of NUREG-1432 and the Final Policy Statement, and, therefore, are acceptable.

Changes involving more restrictive requirements have been found to be acceptable and are likely to enhance the safety of plant operations.

Changes involving less restrictive requirements have been reviewed individually. When requirements have

been shown to provide little or no safety benefit or place unnecessary burdens on the licensee, their removal from the TS was justified. In most cases, relaxations previously granted to individual plants on a plant-specific basis were the result of a generic NRC action, or of agreements reached during discussions with the OG and found to be acceptable for Calvert Cliffs. Generic relaxations contained in NUREG-1432 as well as proposed deviations from NUREG-1432 have also been reviewed by the NRC staff and have been found to be acceptable.

In summary, the proposed revision to the TS was found to provide control of plant operations such that reasonable assurance will be provided so that the health and safety of the public will be adequately protected.

These TS changes will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluent that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed amendments, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to the proposed action would be to deny the request for the amendment. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. Such action would not reduce the environmental impacts of plant operations. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement dated April 1973, for the

Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, Unit Nos. 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on March 16, 1998, the staff consulted with the Maryland State official, Richard J. McLean, of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letters dated December 4, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated March 27, June 9, June 18, July 21, August 14, August 19, September 10, October 6, October 20, October 23, November 5, 1997, and January 12 and 28, 1998, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Calvert County Library, Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

S. Singh Bajwa,

Director, Project Directorate I-1, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98-7425 Filed 3-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-443]

North Atlantic Energy Service Corporation Seabrook Station, Unit No. 1; Issuance of Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

Notice is hereby given that the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR), has taken action with regard to a Petition dated December 18, 1997, submitted by Ms. Jane Doughty on behalf of The Seacoast Anti-Pollution League. The Petition requests that the operating license for Seabrook Station be suspended until such time as a thorough root cause analysis of the reasons underlying the development of leaks in piping of the "B" train of the

residual heat removal (RHR) system is conducted. The leakage was reported by North Atlantic Energy Services Corporation, the Licensee for Seabrook Station, on December 5, 1997. The Petition asserts that there have been past allegations of improper welding practices and documentation, and installation of substandard piping at Seabrook Station and requests that the investigations of the RHR system pipe leakage include findings related to these past allegations.

The Director of NRR has denied the Petitioner's request to suspend the operating license of the Seabrook Station. In the Director's Decision Pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 (DD-98-03), the staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has discussed each of the concerns raised by the Petitioner and found that the cause of the leaks in the piping in the "B" train of the RHR system was the result of service-induced degradation. There were no deficiencies identified in the fabrication of the original piping or welds that would have generic implications for other plant systems and that would require the operating license of the facility to be suspended. The complete text of the Decision follows this notice and is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Exeter Public Library, Founders Park, Exeter, New Hampshire 03833.

A copy of the Decision will be filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission's review in accordance with 10 CFR 2.206(c) of the Commission's regulations. As provided for by this regulation, the Decision will constitute the final action of the Commission 25 days after the date of issuance, unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes a review of the decision in that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Collins,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

Director's Decision Pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206

I. Introduction

On December 18, 1997, Ms. Jane Doughty submitted a Petition to the Executive Director for Operations of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on behalf of The Seacoast Anti-Pollution League requesting that the operating license for Seabrook Station be suspended until such time as a

thorough root cause analysis of the reasons underlying the development of leaks in piping of the "B" train of the residual heat removal (RHR) system is conducted. The leakage was reported by North Atlantic Energy Service Corporation, the Licensee for Seabrook Station, on December 5, 1997.

The Petition requested that the restart of the Seabrook Station following repairs to the RHR system piping be delayed until all such actions requested by the Petition are taken. On January 15, 1998, the NRC informed the Petitioner in an acknowledgment letter that on the basis of the Licensee's preliminary analysis of the cause of the pipe leakage, the NRC staff found no reason to prevent the plant from restarting. The acknowledgment letter further informed the Petitioner that her Petition had been referred to the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation pursuant to 10 CFR 2.206 for preparation of a Director's Decision and that action would be taken within a reasonable time regarding the specific concerns raised in the Petition.

II. Discussion

The Petition requests, in part, "that the operating license for the Seabrook Station Nuclear Power Plant [Seabrook Station] be suspended until such time as a thorough root cause analysis of the reasons underlying the development of leaks . . . in piping in the "B" train of the Residual Heat Removal (RHR) system is conducted, including but not limited to a review of documentation associated with welds in the area of the leakage and their associated inspection documentation, a review of the qualification of the piping involved, and a review of the procedures for ongoing assurance of weld and piping quality at the plant." The Petition asserts that there have been past allegations of improper welding practices and documentation, and installation of substandard piping at Seabrook Station and requests that the investigations of the RHR system pipe leakage include findings related to these past allegations and the implications of this incident for other plant systems. Each of these concerns is addressed below.

A. Root Cause Analysis

The Licensee has concluded that the cause of the RHR piping leak was chloride-induced transgranular stress-corrosion cracking initiated from the outside diameter of the pipe. The stress-corrosion cracking was the result of repeated wettings and dryings of a protective covering attached to the pipe with red duct tape during construction of the facility. The covering was installed to prevent other welding

activities from damaging the pipe after it was installed and should have been removed prior to placing the RHR system in service. After being wetted the protective covering and tape leached chlorides, allowing the chlorides to concentrate on the outer surface of the pipe over time. The chlorides provided an agent to initiate stress-corrosion cracking of the stainless steel pipe material. The Licensee has conducted an inspection of accessible areas both inside and outside containment for similar instances of unapproved materials being attached to stainless steel piping and none were found.

The NRC staff has reviewed the Licensee's conclusions, including observations of the failed pipe section and a review of the relevant metallurgical and chemistry reports. The NRC staff found that the metallurgical and chemistry reports provide an adequate basis for the Licensee's conclusion that the leaks were the result of stress-corrosion cracking initiated from the outside diameter of the pipe that progressed through the pipe wall to the inside surface. The NRC staff's findings are documented in Inspection Report 50/443/97-08.

B. Review of Weld Documentation

The Licensee conducted a review of the original radiographs of the affected welds and found no anomalies in the weld or the base metal. This finding indicates that the cause of the leakage was the result of service-induced conditions and not a weld or piping defect originating from the original construction.

The NRC staff's review of the radiographs confirmed that there were no adverse construction weld quality problems, such as cracks, porosity, or weld slag shown on the pipe weld radiographs in the vicinity of the leaks or on the similar welds on the "A" train of the RHR system. No defective welds were found. The NRC staff's findings are documented in Inspection Report 50-443/97-08.

C. Review of Pipe Qualification

The Licensee reviewed the original material test reports and purchase specification documentation for the affected piping sections. Chemical analysis of the removed piping sections confirmed that the material met the specification for SA312 Type 304 stainless steel pipe.

The NRC staff's review of the chemistry analysis and photomicrographs showed the pipe material to be Type 304 stainless steel. The NRC staff's findings are

documented in Inspection Report 50-443/97-08.

D. Review of the Procedures for Ongoing Assurance of Weld and Pipe Quality

In conjunction with the most recent refueling outage at Seabrook Station, the NRC staff conducted a review of the Licensee's American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code) Section XI inservice inspection program plan for ensuring structural and leaktight integrity of systems important to safety. The NRC inspector found the implementation of all elements of the program to be on schedule and in accordance with the rules of Section XI of the ASME Code.

The NRC inspector observed and/or reviewed the results of inservice inspections conducted by the Licensee on plant equipment, including several piping welds. The NRC inspector found that the inspections were performed in accordance with the rules of Section XI of the ASME Code and NRC regulations. The NRC staff's findings are documented in Inspection Report 50-443/97-03.

E. Review of Past Allegations of Improper Welding Practices

On March 27, 1990, the NRC's Executive Director for Operations established an independent review team to conduct an assessment of the adequacy of the construction welding and nondestructive examination (NDE) practices at Seabrook Station. The team's findings are documented in NUREG-1425, "Welding and Nondestructive Examination Issues at Seabrook Nuclear Station." The independent review team concluded that the pipe welding and NDE programs were generally consistent with applicable codes and NRC requirements and resulted in technically acceptable pipe welds.

In investigating the leaks in the "B" train of the RHR system reported on December 5, 1997, the NRC staff did not identify any factors that would provide a basis for disagreeing with the Licensee's conclusion that the cause of the leakage was the result of service-induced conditions and not a weld or piping defect originating from the original construction. Likewise, the investigation of this issue did not provide any information that would question the validity of NUREG-1425. Therefore, no further action by the NRC staff is warranted with respect to the past allegations of improper welding practices and substandard quality

piping in response to the Petitioner's request.

F. Implications for Other Plant Systems

The Licensee has concluded that the cause of the leakage in the "B" train of the RHR system reported on December 5, 1997, was the result of a service-induced condition and not a defect originating from the original construction. The NRC staff has reviewed the Licensee's activities related to the root cause analysis and subsequent repair in response to the RHR system pipe leakage. The NRC staff found no evidence of improper welding practices or substandard piping that contributed to the RHR system pipe leakage and that would result in generic implications to other plant systems.

III. Conclusion

The NRC staff has reviewed the information submitted by the Petitioner, and the Petitioner's request to suspend the operating license of the Seabrook Station is denied. As described above, the NRC staff has found that the cause of the leaks in the piping in the "B" train of the RHR system was the result of service-induced degradation. There were no deficiencies identified in the fabrication of the original piping or welds that would have generic implications for other plant systems and that would require the operating license of the facility to be suspended.

As provided in 10 CFR 2.206(c), a copy of this Decision will be filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission's review. This Decision will constitute the final action of the Commission 25 days after issuance, unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes review of the Decision in that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Collins,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98-7427 Filed 3-20-98; 8:45 am]

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

Upon Written Request, Copies Available
From: Securities and Exchange
Commission, Office of Filings and

Information Services, Washington, DC 20549

Extension:

Rule 15Ba2-1, SEC File No. 270-88, OMB
Control No. 3235-0083

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), the Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") is publishing the following summary of collection for public comment. The Commission plans to submit this existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget for extension and approval.

Rule 15Ba2-1 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 provides that an application for registration with the Commission by a bank municipal securities dealer must be filed on Form MSD.

The staff estimates that approximately 40 respondents will utilize this application procedure annually, with a total burden of 60 hours, based upon past submissions. The staff estimates that the average number of hours necessary to comply with the requirements of Rule 15Ba2-1 is 1.5 hours. The average cost per hour is approximately \$40. Therefore, the total cost of compliance for the respondents is \$2,400.

Written comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

Direct your written comments to Michael E. Bartell, Associate Executive Director, Office of Information Technology, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 5th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20549.

Dated: March 13, 1998.

Margaret H. McFarland,

Deputy Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-7371 Filed 3-20-98; 8:45 am]

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