

p.m., Closed Session; July 29, 1999—3:30 p.m., Open Session.

PLACE: The National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Room 1235, Arlington, VA 22230.

STATUS: Part of this meeting will be closed to the public. Part of this meeting will be open to the public.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Closed Session (12:30 p.m.–12:45 p.m.)

Closed Session Minutes
Board Member Proposals
Personnel

Closed Session (2 p.m.–3:30 p.m.)

Awards and Agreements
FY 2001 Budget

Open Session (3:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.)

Minutes, May 1999
Closed Session Items for November 1999
Chair's Report
Director's Report
Committee Reports
NSB 2000 Meeting Calendar
Criteria for NSB Delegation of Authority
NSF Strategic Plan
Report of the CPP Task Force on the Environment
NSF Commendation to Navy Personnel for Antarctic Support

[FR Doc. 99–18776 Filed 7–19–99; 3:50 pm]

BILLING CODE 7555–01–M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 40–8794–MLA and 40–8778–MLA ASLBP No. 99–769–08–MLA]

Molycorp, Inc.; Designation of Presiding Officer

Pursuant to delegation by the Commission dated December 29, 1972, published in the **Federal Register**, 37 FR 28,710 (1972), and Sections 2.1201 and 2.1207 of Part 2 of the Commission's Regulations, a single member of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel is hereby designated to rule on petitions for leave to intervene and/or requests for hearing and, if necessary, to serve as the Presiding Officer to conduct an informal adjudicatory hearing in the following proceeding.

Molycorp, Inc. (Request for Materials License Amendment)

The hearing, if granted, will be conducted pursuant to 10 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart L, of the Commission's Regulations, "Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudications in Materials and Operator Licensing Proceedings." This proceeding concerns

a request for hearing submitted by the City of Washington, Pennsylvania, and Canton Township, Pennsylvania. The requests were filed in response to a notice of receipt by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of a license amendment request of Molycorp, Inc., for temporary storage at its Washington, Pennsylvania facility of decommissioning waste now located at its facility in York, Pennsylvania. The notice of the proposed amendment request was published in the **Federal Register** at 64 Fed. Reg. 31,021 (June 9, 1999).

The Presiding Officer in this proceeding is Administrative Judge Peter B. Bloch. Pursuant to the provisions of 10 C.F.R. 2.722, 2.1209, Administrative Judge Richard F. Cole has been appointed to assist the Presiding Officer in taking evidence and in preparing a suitable record for review.

All correspondence, documents, and other materials shall be filed with Judge Bloch and Judge Cole in accordance with 10 C.F.R. 2.1203. Their addresses are:

Administrative Judge Peter B. Bloch,
Presiding Officer, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001

Dr. Richard F. Cole, Special Assistant,
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001

Issued at Rockville, Maryland, this 15th day of July, 1999.

G. Paul Bollwerk, III,

Chief Administrative Judge, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel.

[FR Doc. 99–18631 Filed 7–20–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–397]

In the Matter of Washington Public Power Supply System, WPPSS Nuclear Project No. 2 (WNP–2), Exemption

I

Washington Public Power Supply System (the Supply System or the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. NPF–21, which authorizes operation of the Washington Public Power Supply System Nuclear Project 2 (WNP–2). The facility consists of a boiling water reactor at the licensee's site in Benton County, Washington. The operating license provides, among other things, that

WNP–2 is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Commission now or hereafter in effect.

II

Pursuant to 10 CFR 55.59(a)(1), each licensed operator is required to successfully complete a requalification program developed by the licensee that has been approved by the Commission. This program is to be conducted for a continuous period not to exceed 24 months in duration. In addition, pursuant to 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2), each licensed operator must also pass a comprehensive requalification written examination and an annual operating test.

By letter dated May 7, 1999, the Supply System requested an exemption under 10 CFR 55.11 from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2). The scheduler exemption requested would extend the completion date for the administration of the annual operating test for the WNP–2 requalification program from October 23, 1999, to February 12, 2000, because the scheduled examination time coincides with the plant refueling outage. The requested exemption would constitute a one-time extension of the annual operating test requirement of the requalification program.

The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 55.11 states that, "The Commission may, upon application by an interested person, or upon its own initiative, grant such exemptions from the requirements of the regulations in this part as it determines are authorized by law and will not endanger life or property and are otherwise in the public interest."

III

In support of its request for exemption, the Supply System indicated that the licensed operators at WNP–2 will continue to participate in the ongoing requalification training program. The Supply System further indicated that due to the two extended shutdowns, the annual operating test would have to be conducted on overtime. The exemption would eliminate the need to conduct the annual operating tests on overtime.

The NRC staff finds the one-time exemption will allow additional licensed operator support during the current refueling outage, which will provide a safety enhancement during plant shutdown operations, and post-maintenance testing and eliminate the need to conduct annual operating tests on overtime. The affected licensed operators will continue to demonstrate and possess the required levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed

to safely operate the plant throughout the extension period via continuation of the current satisfactory licensed operator requalification program. In meeting the requirement for the administration of an annual operating test, the current plant refueling outage could be prolonged without a net benefit to safety, and would otherwise have a detrimental effect on the public interest.

IV

The Commission has determined that pursuant to 10 CFR 55.11, granting an exemption to the Washington Public Power Supply System from the requirements in 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2) is authorized by law and will not endanger life or property and is otherwise in the public interest.

Therefore, the Commission hereby grants Washington Public Power Supply System an exemption on a one-time only basis from the scheduler requirements of 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2), to allow the Washington Public Power Supply System Nuclear Project 2 current annual operating examination to be extended until February 12, 2000.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has also determined that the issuance of the exemption will have no significant impact on the environment. An Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact was noticed in the **Federal Register** on July 9, 1999 (64 FR 37173).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 14th day of July, 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Bruce A. Boger,

Director, Division of Inspection Program Management Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 99-18635 Filed 7-20-99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. STN 50-456, STN 50-457, STN 50-454, STN 50-455, 50-237, 50-249, 50-373, 50-374, 50-254 and 50-265]

Commonwealth Edison Company: Braidwood Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, Byron Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, Dresden Station, Unit Nos. 2 and 3, LaSalle County Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, Quad Cities Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is

considering issuance of exemptions from certain requirements of its regulations to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-72, NPF-77, NPF-37, NPF-66, DPR-19, DPR-25, NPF-11, NPF-18, DPR-29 and DPR-30 issued to the Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd, the licensee), for operation of Braidwood Station, located in Will County, Illinois; Byron Station located in Ogle County, Illinois; Dresden Station located in Grundy County, Illinois; LaSalle County Station located in LaSalle County, Illinois; and Quad Cities Station located in Rock Island County, Illinois, respectively.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed actions would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.71(e)(4) regarding submission of revisions to the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR). Under the proposed exemptions, the licensee would submit updates to the UFSARs within 24 calendar months of the previous UFSAR revision submittal. Braidwood and Byron share a common FSAR and the Dresden, Quad Cities, and LaSalle Stations maintain their own FSARs that are common to both units at each station.

The proposed actions are in accordance with the licensee's application dated May 4, 1993.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The *Code of Federal Regulations*, 10 CFR 50.71(e)(4), requires licensees to submit updates to their FSARs annually or within 6 months after each refueling outage provided that the interval between successive updates does not exceed 24 months. Since the units for each station, and the Braidwood and Byron stations, share a common FSAR, the licensee must update the same document annually or within 6 months after a refueling outage for each unit. The underlying purpose of the rule was to relieve licensees of the burden of filing annual FSAR revisions while assuring that such revisions are made at least every 24 months. The Commission reduced the burden, in part, by permitting a licensee to submit its FSAR revisions 6 months after refueling outages for its facility, but did not provide for multiple unit facilities sharing a common FSAR in the rule. Rather, the Commission stated: "with respect to the concern about multiple facilities sharing a common FSAR, licensees will have maximum flexibility for scheduling updates on a case-by-case basis" (57 FR 39355) (1992). Allowing the exemption would maintain the

updated FSAR current within 24 months of the last revision.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed actions and concludes that they involve administrative activities unrelated to plant operation.

The proposed actions will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed actions.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed actions do not involve any historic sites. They do not affect non-radiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed actions.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with these actions.

Alternative to the Proposed Actions

As an alternative to the proposed actions, the staff considered denial of the proposed actions (i.e., the "no-action" alternative). Denial of the exemptions would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed actions and the alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

These actions do not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statements for Braidwood, Byron, Dresden, LaSalle, or Quad Cities.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on May 14, 1999, the staff consulted with the Illinois official, Mr. Frank Nizeolik of the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed actions. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to