To support training and dry runs prior to the initial loading, Duke requests the delivery of the first cask by January 2000. TN states that to meet this schedule, purchase of cask components must begin promptly and fabrication must begin by September 1998.

The TN–32 COC application, dated September 24, 1997, is under consideration by the Commission. It is anticipated, if approved, the TN–32 COC may be issued in late 1999.

The proposed fabrication exemption will not authorize use of the casks to store spent fuel. That will occur only when, and if, a COC is issued. NRC approval of the fabrication exemption request should not be construed as an NRC commitment to favorably consider TN's application for a COC. TN will bear the risk of all activities conducted under the exemption, including the risk that the five casks TN plans to construct may not be usable because they may not meet specifications or conditions placed in a COC that NRC may ultimately approve.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action: The Environmental Assessment for the final rule, ''Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel in NRC-Approved Storage Casks at Nuclear Power Reactor Sites'', (55 FR 29181 (1990)) considered the potential environmental impacts of casks which are used to store spent fuel under a COC and concluded that there would be no significant environmental impacts. The proposed action now under consideration would not permit use of the casks, but only fabrication. There are no radiological environmental impacts from fabrication since cask fabrication does not involve radiological or radioactive materials. The major non-radiological environmental impacts involve use of natural resources due to cask fabrication. Each TN–32 storage cask weighs approximately 100 tons and is fabricated mainly from steel and plastic. The estimated 500 tons of steel required for five casks is expected to have very little impact on the steel industry. Additionally, the estimated 5 tons of plastic required for five casks is insignificant compared to the millions of tons of plastic produced annually. Cask fabrication would be at a metal fabrication facility, not at the reactor site. Fabrication of five casks is insignificant compared to the amount of metal fabrication performed annually in the United States. If the casks are not usable, the casks could be disposed of or recycled. The amount of material disposed of is insignificant compared to the amount of steel and plastic that is disposed of annually in the United States. Based upon this information, the fabrication of five casks will have no significant impact on the environment since no radioactive materials are involved, and the amount of natural resources used is minimal.

Alternative to the Proposed Action: Since there is no significant environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact are not evaluated. The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny approval of the exemption and, therefore, not allow cask fabrication until a COC is issued. However, the environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action would be the same.

Given that there are no significant differences in environmental impacts between the proposed action and the alternative considered and that the applicant has a legitimate need to fabricate the casks prior to certification and is willing to assume the risk that the fabricated casks may not be certified or may require modification, the Commission concludes that the preferred alternative is to grant the exemption.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: The North Carolina Division of Radiation Protection was consulted about the EA for the proposed action and had no concerns.

References used in preparation of the EA:

1. NRC, Environmental Assessment Regarding Final Rule, ''Storage of Spent Fuel in NRC-Approved Storage Casks at Power Reactor Sites,'' 55 FR 29181.

2. NRC, 10 CFR part 51, Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR part 51. Based upon the foregoing EA, the Commission finds that the proposed action of granting an exemption from 10 CFR 72.234(c) so that TN may fabricate five TN–32 casks prior to issuance of a COC will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

This application was docketed under 10 CFR part 72, Docket 72–1021. For further details with respect to this action, see the application dated March 11, 1998, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555, and the Local Public Document Room at the J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, UNCC Station, Charlotte, NC 28223.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 6th day of May 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Susan F. Shankman,

Acting Deputy Director, Spent Fuel Project Office, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 98–12670 Filed 5–12–98; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket 72–1027]

Transnuclear, Inc.; Issuance of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

By letter dated January 23, 1998, Transnuclear, Inc. (TN or applicant) requested an exemption, pursuant to 10 CFR 72.7, from the requirements of 10 CFR 72.234(c). TN, located in Hawthorne, New York, is seeking Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) approval to fabricate nine TN–68 dry spent fuel storage casks prior to receipt of a Certificate of Compliance (COC). The TN–68 cask is similar in design to the TN–32 and TN–40 dry spent fuel storage casks which have been approved for use at Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installations with site-specific licenses. The TN–68 casks are intended to be used by PECO Energy Company (PECO) at the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station (PBAPS) located in Delta, Pennsylvania, under the general license provisions of subpart K of 10 CFR Part 72.

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Identification of Proposed Action: The applicant is seeking Commission approval to fabricate nine TN–68 casks prior to the Commission's issuance of a COC. The applicant requests an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 72.234(c), which states that ''fabrication of casks under the Certificate of Compliance must not start prior to receipt of the Certificate of Compliance for the cask model.'' The proposed action before the Commission is whether to grant this exemption under 10 CFR 72.7.

Need for the Proposed Action: TN requests the exemption to ensure the availability of storage casks by July 2000, so that PECO can maintain full core off-load capability at PBAPS. TN states that to meet this schedule, purchase of cask components must

begin promptly and fabrication must begin in the summer of 1998. The TN–68 COC application, dated January 23, 1998, is under consideration by the Commission. It is anticipated, if approved, the TN–68 COC may be issued in 2000.

The proposed fabrication exemption will not authorize use of the casks to store spent fuel. That will occur only when, and if, a COC is issued. NRC approval of the fabrication exemption request may not be construed as an NRC commitment to favorably consider TN's application for a COC. TN will bear the risk of all activities conducted under the exemption, including the risk that the nine casks TN plans to construct may not be usable because they may not meet specifications or conditions placed in a COC that NRC may ultimately approve.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action: The Environmental Assessment for the final rule, ''Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel in NRC-Approved Storage Casks at Nuclear Power Reactor Sites' (55 FR 29181 (1990)), considered the potential environmental impacts of casks which are used to store spent fuel under a COC and concluded that there would be no significant environmental impacts. The proposed action now under consideration would not permit use of the casks, but only fabrication. There are no radiological environmental impacts from fabrication since cask fabrication does not involve radiological or radioactive materials. The major non-radiological environmental impacts involve use of natural resources due to cask fabrication. Each TN–68 storage cask weighs approximately 100 tons and is fabricated mainly from steel and plastic. The estimated 900 tons of steel required for nine casks is expected to have very little impact on the steel industry. Additionally, the estimated 9 tons of plastic required for nine casks is insignificant compared to the millions of tons of plastic produced annually. Cask fabrication would be at a metal fabrication facility, not at the reactor site. Fabrication of nine casks is insignificant compared to the amount of metal fabrication performed annually in the United States. If the casks are not usable, the casks could be disposed of or recycled. The amount of material disposed of is insignificant compared to the amount of steel and plastic that is disposed of annually in the United States. Based upon this information, the fabrication of nine casks will have no significant impact on the environment since no radioactive materials are involved, and the amount of natural resources used is minimal.

Alternative to the Proposed Action: Since there is no significant environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact are not evaluated. The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny approval of the exemption and, therefore, not allow cask fabrication until a COC is issued. However, if a COC is issued and fabrication of the casks occurs, the environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative action would be the same.

Given that there are no significant differences in environmental impacts between the proposed action and the alternative considered and that the applicant has a legitimate need to fabricate the casks prior to certification and is willing to assume the risk that the fabricated casks may not be certified or may require modification, the Commission concludes that the preferred alternative is to grant the exemption.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection was consulted about the EA for the proposed action and had no comments.

References used in preparation of the EA:

1. NRC, Environmental Assessment Regarding Final Rule, ''Storage of Spent Fuel in NRC-Approved Storage Casks at Power Reactor Sites,'' 55 FR 29181.

2. NRC, 10 CFR part 51, Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR part 51. Based upon the foregoing EA, the Commission finds that the proposed action of granting an exemption from 10 CFR 72.234(c) so that TN may fabricate nine TN–68 casks prior to issuance of a COC will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

This application was docketed under 10 CFR part 72, Docket 72–1027. For further details with respect to this action, see the application dated January 23, 1998, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555, and the Local Public Document Room at the State Library of Pennsylvania, Walnut Street and Commonwealth Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 5th day of May 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,

Susan F. Shankman,

Acting Deputy Director, Spent Fuel Project Office, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 98–12674 Filed 5–12–98; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Number 07003085; License Number SNM–2001]

Public Meeting To Discuss the Decommissioning of the Babcock and Wilcox Shallow Land Disposal Area in Parks Township, PA

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice is to inform the public of a meeting to discuss the decommissioning of the Babcock and Wilcox (B&W) Shallow Land Disposal Area (SLDA) in Parks Township, PA. The meeting will be held on May 27, 1998, in the Leechburg High School Cafeteria on Siberian Avenue, in Leechburg, PA. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and will end at 9:30 p.m. The meeting will consist of a facilitated discussion, followed by an opportunity for comments by interested members of the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The SLDA is located in Armstrong County, PA, approximately 23 miles east-northeast of Pittsburgh. The SLDA consists of ten waste disposal trenches comprising approximately 1.2 acres surrounded by a 40-acre fenced buffer area. The SLDA was formerly owned by Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (NUMEC) which also operated the nearby Apollo Nuclear Fuel Fabrication Facility. In the 1960s and 1970s, the SLDA was used by NUMEC to dispose of radioactively contaminated (primarily uranium and thorium) and non-radioactive wastes in accordance with NRC regulations at 10 CFR 20.304. NRC rescinded 10 CFR 20.304 in 1981. In 1967, Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) purchased stock in NUMEC and then sold it to B&W in 1971.

In September 1994, B&W submitted several remediation alternatives for the SLDA to NRC. B&W's preferred alternative was to stabilize the waste in place by covering the buried waste with a soil and synthetic cover and isolating