pressure, would increase the minimum required nitrogen cover pressure for the safety injection tanks (SITs) from 254 psig to 260 psig to include instrument uncertainties.

7. Action 3.1.5.d, misalignment distance for movable control assemblies, the criterion to enter the Action statement for the LCO for misalignment of control assemblies would be reduced from 19 inches to 9.9 inches based on a revised analysis.

These seven changes result in more restrictive conditions on safe plant operation, are based on new safety analyses for PVNGS, prevent unnecessary shutdowns when equipment is intentionally made inoperable, or do not affect existing safety analyses for PVNGS.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed revision to the CTS for PVNGS. Changes which are administrative in nature have been found to have no effect on the technical content of the TS. The increased clarity and understanding these changes bring to the TS are expected to improve the operators control of PVNGS in normal and accident conditions.

Relocation of requirements from the CTS to other licensee-controlled documents does not change the requirements themselves. Future changes to these requirements may then be made by the licensee under 10 CFR 50.59 and other NRC-approved control mechanisms which will ensure continued maintenance of adequate requirements. All such relocations have been found consistent with the guidelines of NUREG–1432 and the Commission's Final Policy Statement.

Changes involving more restrictive requirements have been found to enhance plant safety.

Changes involving less restrictive requirements have been reviewed individually. When requirements have been shown to provide little or no safety benefit, or to place an unnecessary burden 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 action, or of agreements reached during discussions with the OG and found to be acceptable for the plant. Generic relaxations contained in NUREG–1432 have been reviewed by the NRC staff and found to be acceptable.

In summary, the proposed revisions to the TS were found to provide control of plant operations such that reasonable assurance will be provided 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 to the types of any effluent that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational exposure. Also, these changes do not affect the effect the design or operation of the plant, do not involve any modifications to the plant or any increase in the licensed power for the plant, and will not create any new or unreviewed environmental impacts that were not considered in the Final Environmental Statement (FES) related to the operation of PVNGS dated February 1982. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological impacts associated with the proposed TS amendments.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed amendments involve features located entirely within the restricted area defined in 10 CFR Part 20. They do not affect non-radiological plant effluents and have no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological impacts associated with the proposed TS amendments.

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 amendments would be to deny the amendments. Denial of the licensee's application would not reduce the environmental impacts of PVNGS 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 FES for PVNGS dated February 1982.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on February 9, 1998, the staff consulted with the Arizona State official, Mr. William Wright of the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency, 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 application dated October 4, 1996, as supplemented by (1) 19 letters submitted in 1997 dated January 31, March 16, May 30 (2 letters), June 6, July 18 (5 letters), August 31, September 18 (2 letters), September 19 (2 letters), November 7, November 14, November 26, and December 16, and (2) the letter dated February 12, 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 Phoenix Public Library, 1221 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 19th day of March 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Jack N. Donohew,

Senior Project Manager, Project Directorate IV–1, Division of Reactor Projects—III/IV, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98–7809 Filed 3–24–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–327 and 50–328]

Tennessee Valley Authority Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, 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 an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations for Facility Operating License Nos. DPR–77 and DPR–79, issued to The Tennessee Valley Authority (the licensee), for operation of the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, located in Hamilton County, Tennessee.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR 70.24, which requires in each area in which special nuclear material (SNM) is handled, used, or stored, a monitoring system that will energize clear audible alarms if accidental criticality occurs.

The proposed action would also exempt the licensee from the requirements to maintain emergency procedures for each area in which this licensed SNM is handled, used, or stored to ensure that all personnel withdraw to an area of safety upon the sounding of the alarm, to familiarize personnel with the evacuation plan, and to designate responsible individuals for determining the cause of the alarm, and to place radiation survey instruments in accessible locations for use in such an emergency.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated December 5, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of 10 CFR 70.24 is to ensure that if a criticality were to occur during the handling of SNM, personnel would be alerted to that fact and would take appropriate action. At a commercial nuclear power plant, the inadvertent criticality with which 10 CFR 70.24 is concerned could occur during fuel handling operations. The SNM that could be assembled into a critical mass at a commercial nuclear power plant is in the form of nuclear fuel; the quantity of other forms of SNM that is stored on site is small enough to preclude achieving a critical mass. Because the fuel is not enriched beyond 5.0 weight percent Uranium-235 and because commercial nuclear plant licensees have procedures and features designed to prevent inadvertent criticality, the staff has determined that it is unlikely that an inadvertent criticality could occur due to the handling of SNM at a commercial power reactor. The requirements of 10 CFR 70.24, therefore, are not necessary to ensure the safety of personnel during the handling of SNM at commercial power reactors.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that there is no significant environmental impact if the exemption is granted. Inadvertent or accidental criticality will be precluded through compliance with the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 Technical Specifications (TS), the design of the fuel storage racks providing geometric spacing of fuel assemblies in their storage locations, and administrative controls imposed on fuel handling procedures. TS requirements specify reactivity limits for the fuel storage racks and minimum spacing between the fuel assemblies in the storage racks.

Appendix A of 10 CFR Part 50, ''General Design Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants,'' Criterion 62, requires that criticality in the fuel storage and handling system shall be prevented by physical systems or processes, preferably by use of geometrically-safe configurations. This is met at Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2, as identified in the TS and the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR). Sequoyah TS Section 5.6.1.2 states that the new fuel storage racks are designed for dry storage of unirradiated fuel assemblies having a U–235 enrichment less than or equal to 5.0 weight percent, while maintaining a k-effective of less than or equal to 0.98 under the most reactive condition. UFSAR Section 9.1.1, New Fuel Storage, for both Units 1 and 2 specify that the fuel racks are designed to provide sufficient spacing between fuel assemblies to maintain a subcritical (k-effective less than or equal to 0.98) array assuming the most reactive condition, and under all design loadings including the safe shutdown earthquake. The UFSAR also specifies that the new fuel racks are designed to preclude the insertion of a new fuel assembly between cavities.

The proposed exemption would not result in any significant radiological impacts. The proposed exemption would not affect radiological plant effluent nor cause any significant occupational exposures since the TS design controls (including geometric spacing of fuel assembly storage spaces) and administrative controls preclude inadvertent criticality. The amount of radioactive waste would not be changed by the proposed exemption.

The proposed exemption does not result in any significant nonradiological environmental impacts. The proposed exemption involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed exemption, the staff considered denial of the requested exemption. Denial of the request would result in no change in current environmental impacts. 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 Related to the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Unit Nos. 1 and 2,'' dated February 13, 1974.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on January 30, 1998, the Commission staff consulted with the State of Tennessee Official (Joelle Key) 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 letter dated December 5, 1997, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, which is located at The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, D.C., and at the local public document room located at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Library, 1001 Broad Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 17th day of March 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Frederick J. Hebdon,

Director, Project Directorate II–3, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98–7812 Filed 3–24–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Biweekly Notice; Applications and Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses Involving No Significant Hazards Considerations

I. Background

Pursuant to Public Law 97–415, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC staff) is publishing this regular biweekly notice. Public Law 97–415 revised section 189 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), to require the Commission to publish notice of any