www.nrc.gov) under the FedWorld collection link on the home page tool bar. The document will be available on the NRC home page site for 60 days after the signature date of this notice.

Comments and questions about the information collection requirements may be directed to the NRC Clearance Officer, Brenda Jo. Shelton, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, T–6 F33, Washington, DC, 20555–0001, or by telephone at 301–415–7233, or by Internet electronic mail at BJS1@NRC.GOV.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 8th day of January, 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Brenda Jo. Shelton,

NRC Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 98–1048 Filed 1–14–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–302]

Florida Power Corporation; Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR 72, issued to the Florida Power Corporation (FPC or the licensee), for operation of the Crystal River Nuclear Generating Unit 3 (CR3) located in Citrus County, Florida.

The licensee proposed a revision to the description of the starting logic for the Reactor Building (RB) Recirculation System Fan Coolers, as discussed in the CR3 Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR), Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 9, and Improved Technical Specification (ITS) Bases Section 3.6. The change to the starting logic would ensure that only one RB Fan starts on an Engineered Safeguards (ES) Reactor Building Isolation and Cooling (RBIC) signal. A modification to the plant will install components that could increase the probability of occurrence of a malfunction of equipment important to safety previously evaluated in the FSAR. FPC has determined that proposed changes to associated electrical controls involve an Unreviewed Safety Question (USQ). Therefore, NRC review and approval are required.

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.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The licensee made its request on December 5, 1997, and as required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), and provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration which is presented below:

1. Does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The change to the starting logic for the RB Fans affects the ES equipment that responds to mitigate an accident. The RB Fans are not accident initiators and the change to the starting logic cannot initiate an accident. Therefore, the probability of occurrence of an evaluated accident is not increased.

The RB Fan start logic change selects an available RB Fan to run upon an RBIC actuation, but only allows the operation of one RB Fan to prevent overloading the SW [Nuclear Services Closed Cycle Cooling] System. The containment analysis for CR–3 assumes that one train of ES equipment is available for accident mitigation, specifically, one RB Fan and one RB Spray train for containment cooling. The combination of two RB Spray trains with no RB Fans is also evaluated and found to be acceptable. These available containment cooling equipment combinations represent the minimum that would be available for accident response both before and after the implementation of this change.

In addition to the same equipment being available to mitigate an accident, there is no change to the analyzed containment response. The time delay in the start of an RB Fan of up to several seconds due to the modification has been evaluated through containment analysis sensitivity studies. The results of these studies show that containment peak pressure and temperature, and long term temperature profiles, are not affected. The consequences of an accident are directly related to containment pressure and temperature conditions. Since containment conditions following an accident are not affected by this modification, there will be no change to the consequences of any analyzed accident.

2. Does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The modification changes the RB Fan start logic in the event of an accident. The new start circuit ensures that one RB Fan is operating in response to an RBIC actuation, but prevents the operation of two fans. This modification prevents the thermal overloading of the SW System in order to preserve the operability of equipment cooled by the SW System. Several potential new failure modes were evaluated and determined not to create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident.

Additionally, the RB Fans are engineered safeguards equipment designed to mitigate an accident, and the SW System is an accident mitigation support system. These systems are not accident initiators. The ES electrical busses and the EDG [emergency diesel generator] are not affected by this change. All containment design conditions are met with this change.

Therefore, this change cannot create the possibility of an accident of a different kind than previously evaluated in the SAR.

3. Does not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

Technical Specification 3.6.6 states that two RB Spray trains and two RB containment cooling trains must be operable. This specification ensures diversity and redundancy of the containment cooling system. Following the modification, all margins will be maintained. Two RB Fans will be operable and capable of starting on an RBIC signal. The modified circuitry maintains the RB Fan redundancy. The RB Sprays are not affected by this modification.

The margin of safety associated with the containment maximum pressure and temperature in response to a LOCA [loss-of-coolant accident] is not affected since any failure of this modification results in equipment combinations that have been analyzed and determined to be acceptable. Containment LOCA response sensitivity studies have verified that the small start delay, associated with the modified RB Fan start circuit, has no effect on the post-LOCA peak temperature and pressure in containment. Also, the failure of SW valves that results in the loss of the ability of the RB Fan Coolers to remove heat or the failure of either RB Fan to run, will not affect the containment peak temperature and pressure conditions since two trains of RB Spray are available.

The proposed modification allows only one RB Fan to operate post-accident. This ensures that the SW System is not overloaded and SW temperatures remain within design basis limits. Therefore, there is no reduction in the margin of safety for the SW System equipment cooling function after the implementation of this change.

The small additional electrical loads, and the out-of-sequence loading of an RB Fan associated with this change have been evaluated and determined to be within the load limits of the EDG and ES electrical busses. Therefore, there is no reduction in the electrical system margin of safety.

Based on the above evaluation, there is no reduction in the margin of safety associated with the equipment and systems affected by this change.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period, such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch, Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this **Federal Register** notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D22, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By February 17, 1998, 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 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, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Coastal Region Library, 8619 W. Crystal Street, Crystal River, Florida.

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 should 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 which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should 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 which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter. 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 the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which 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. 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 within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which 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.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a 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 may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001, and to R. Alexander Glenn, General Counsel, Florida Power Corporation, MAC—A5A, P.O. Box 14042, St. Petersburg, Florida 33733–4042, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the

Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding 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).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated December 5, 1997, which 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 Coastal Region Library, 8619 W. Crystal Street, Crystal River, Florida.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of January 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

L. Raghavan,

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

[FR Doc. 98–1046 Filed 1–14–98; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–271]

Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation; Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station; 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 No. DPR–28, issued to Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation (the licensee), for operation of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station located in Windham County, Vermont.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the 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 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 special nuclear material 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 16, 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 special nuclear material, 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 special nuclear material 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 special nuclear material that is stored on site in any given location 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 design features that prevent inadvertent criticality, the staff has determined that it is unlikely that an inadvertent criticality could occur due to the handling of special nuclear material 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 special nuclear material 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 Vermont Yankee Technical Specifications, 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. Technical Specifications 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 the 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 the Vermont Yankee Station, as identified in the Technical Specifications and the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR).

The change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, 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 does involve 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 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 action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the application 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 for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on January 9, 1998, the staff consulted with the Vermont State official, Mr. William K. Sherman, of the Department of Public Service, 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.