Power rerate does not introduce any new or different radiological release pathways and does not increase the probability of an operator error or equipment malfunction that would result in a radiological release. Thus, there will be no significant increase in the types or amounts of radiological effluents.

Tables S–3 and S–4 of 10 CFR 51.51 and 10 CFR 51.52, respectively, outline the environmental effects of uranium fuel cycle activities and fuel and radioactive waste transportation. The environmental evaluation supporting Table S–3 assumed a reference reactor with a specific capacity factor that results in an adjusted daily electricity production during a reference year. An average burnup and enrichment are also assumed. MNGP will not exceed the assumption of the reference reactor year, but will exceed the average burnup and fuel enrichment criteria as a result of power rerate. The environmental impacts of the higher burnup and enrichment values were documented in NUREG/CR–5009, ''Assessment of the Use of Extended Burnup Fuels in Light Water Power Reactors,'' and discussed in the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, which was published in the **Federal Register** on February 29, 1988 (53 FR 6040). The staff concluded that no significant adverse effects will be generated by increasing the burnup levels as long as the maximum rod average burnup level of any fuel rod is no greater than 60 Gwd/MtU [gigawatt-days per metric ton of uranium]. The staff also stated that the environmental impacts summarized in Tables S–3 and S–4 for a burnup level of 33 Gwd/MtU are conservative and bound the corresponding impacts for burnup levels up to 60 Gwd/MtU and uranium-235 enrichments up to 5 weight percent. These conclusions are applicable to MNGP since the burnup levels and enrichment amounts bound the values that will occur during Monticello rerate. Based on the above, there are no adverse radiological or nonradiological impacts associated with the use of extended fuel burnup and/or increased enrichment and, therefore, power rerate will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action (no-action alternative). Denial of the proposed action would result in no change in current environmental impacts of plant operation but would restrict operation to the currently licensed power level. The environmental impact 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 MNGP.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on August 10, 1998, the NRC staff consulted with the Minnesota State official, Mr. Timothy Donakowski, of the Minnesota Department of Public Health, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Final Finding of No Significant Impact

The staff has reviewed the proposed power rerate for the MNGP relative to the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51. On January 27, 1998, the staff published a draft Environmental Assessment in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 3929), for public comment. No comments were received.

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 submittals dated July 26, 1996, and December 4, 1997, 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 Minneapolis Public Library, Technology and Science Department, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 27th day of August 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Cynthia A. Carpenter,

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

[FR Doc. 98–23460 Filed 8–31–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–260 AND 50–296]

Tennessee Valley Authority Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Units 2 and 3; Environmental Assessment and Finding of no Significant Impact

Introduction

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC, or the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR–52 and DPR–68 issued to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA or the licensee) for operation of the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant (BFN) Units 2 and 3, located in Limestone County, Alabama.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would allow the licensee to increase allowed core power level by 5 percent, from 3293 megawatt thermal (MWt) to the uprated power level of 3458 MWt.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendment dated October 1, 1997, as supplemented October 14, 1997; and March 16 and 20, April 1 and 28, May 1, 20 and 22, June 12, 17 and 26, and July 17, 24, and 31, 1998.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action is needed to allow the licensee to increase the licensed core thermal power and the potential electrical output of each BFN Units 2 and 3 by approximately 55 MWt and thus, providing additional electric power to service TVA's grid. The proposed thermal power uprate project is in accordance with the generic boiling water reactor (BWR) power uprate program established by the General Electric Company and approved by the NRC in a letter dated September 30, 1991. Power uprate has been widely recognized by the industry as a safe and cost-effective method to increase generating capacity. The proposed power uprate will provide the licensee with additional operational flexibility.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that no significant change in the environmental impact can be expected for the proposed increase in power. On September 1, 1972, TVA issued a Final Environmental Statement (FES) which is based on a total electrical

generation name plate rating of 3456 MWt.

Nonradiological Effects

Under normal operation, BFN uses a once-through circulating water system to dissipate heat from the main turbine condensers. Water is drawn from the Tennessee River by the plant intake system and is discharged back to the river. In addition, BFN currently has four mechanical draft cooling towers which can be operated to assist in heat dissipation (helper mode) primarily during summer hot weather periods.

BFN has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the State of Alabama that contains specific requirements applicable to the nonradiological effluents released from BFN. The licensee has evaluated the impact of power uprate on NPDES limitations relating to effluent temperatures, cooling tower usages and effects on biological species. The licensee has evaluated and determined that post-accident effluent temperature from emergency equipment cooling water systems and normal operating condition effluent discharges from other plant systems such as yard drainage, station sumps, and sewage treatment will not change as a result of the power uprate. The licensee indicates that the proposed uprated power level may result in approximately a 1 percent temperature increase of the circulating water leaving the main condenser, a 5 percent increase in the heat rejection to the Tennessee River, and may require additional cooling tower usage during summer periods. The licensee states that as a result of power uprate, cooling tower use would increase approximately 12 percent. However, the impacts of the increase would continue to be bounded by the FES. Based on its evaluation, the licensee has concluded that the changes in discharges to the river as a result of the power uprate will remain within the bounding conditions established in the NPDES permit and no changes to the permit requirements are needed as a result of the power uprate.

As part of its NPDES permit application in April 1994, the licensee documented its biological monitoring program and the effect of thermal discharge limitations on selected biological species. In that report, the licensee concluded that operation of BFN has not had a significant impact on the reproductive success of yellow perch and sauger, or the overall indigenous community in Wheeler Reservoir. This conclusion is not affected by the power uprate.

The proposed action would not change the method of generating electricity at BFN Units 2 and 3 nor the methods of handling influents from the environment or effluents to the environment. The licensee indicates that power uprate does not require any plant modifications. Therefore, no changes to land use or impacts to historical areas would result from lay down areas. Therefore, no new or different types of nonradiological environmental impacts are expected. The staff considers that continued compliance with applicable Federal, State, and Local agency requirements relating to environmental protection will preclude any significant increase in nonradiological impacts over those evaluated in the FES.

Radiological Effects

Gaseous and liquid effluents are produced during both normal operation and abnormal operational events. The licensee has evaluated the radiological effects of the proposed power uprate during both normal operation and postulated accident conditions for gaseous and liquid effluent releases.

The licensee evaluated the offsite radiation exposure to the maximally exposed individual member of the general public for the proposed uprate. Section 2.4, Table 2.4.3, of the FES dated September 1, 1972, projected doses due to radioactive materials released to the environment during routine operations of the BFN units. The estimated radiation exposure of the maximally exposed individual from radioactive material in both liquid and gaseous effluents was 2.2 mrem/year total. The estimated dose based on actual liquid and gaseous effluent releases for the period 1994–1996 was 0.054 mrem/year. Although a 5 percent increase in reactor power does not necessarily result in any increase in effluents, the licensee projected the total body dose would increase to 0.056 mrem/year. This projected dose is about 2 percent of the applicable NRC limits in 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix I. Therefore, the staff concludes that the actual releases at the BFN units will still remain within the FES estimates and are not significantly above current levels.

With respect to onsite radiation exposure, the licensee stated that in-plant radiation levels will generally increase by no more than the percentage increase in power level. The licensee stated that individual worker exposures will be maintained within the acceptable limits by the site as-low-as-reasonably-achievable program, by procedural controls that compensate for increased radiation levels. The 5-year (1991–1996) average collective dose at Browns Ferry was 202 person-rem per year per reactor and 0.5 person-rem per MWe-year. (See NUREG–0713 Volume 18, Occupational Radiation Exposure at Commercial Nuclear Power Reactors and Other Facilities, 1996). This compares favorably with the average collective dose for all BWRs of 306 person-rem per year per reactor and 0.5 person-rem per MWe-year. Considering a potential increase of 5 percent, onsite radiation exposure will not be significantly higher than the current operation and will remain within the acceptable limits of 10 CFR 20. Therefore, the staff concludes that operation at the uprated power level will not significantly impact occupational exposures.

Regarding radioactive waste production, the licensee stated that the total volume of processed waste is not expected to increase appreciably since the only significant increase in processed waste is due to the slightly more frequent backwashes of the condensate demineralizers. Based on this, the licensee concluded that the power uprate would not have an adverse effect on the processing of liquid radwaste. With regard to gaseous waste production, the licensee stated that gaseous effluent releases through building vents are not expected to increase significantly with power uprate, since the releases are maintained within administratively controlled values that are not a function of core power. The noncondensable radioactive gases exhausted from the main condenser and discharged via the off gas system are the major source of radioactive gases. The licensee stated that the operation of the off gas equipment will continue to be within the design parameters for the equipment. The staff concludes that operation at the uprated power will not significantly affect the licensee's ability to process radioactive wastes. Therefore, the staff concludes that operation at the uprated power level will not significantly increase the allowable occupational exposures.

Technical Specification (TS) 4.3 establishes spent fuel storage design features to ensure that the fuel array in fully loaded fuel racks remains subcritical and to prevent inadvertent draining of the spent fuel pool. No changes to TS 4.3 were necessary for the uprate condition. The design basis for the SFP system remains unchanged during power uprate conditions. Therefore, the proposed action will not significantly increase the probability or consequences of spent fuel storage criticality accidents.

As discussed above, the projected dose due to power uprate is about 2 percent of the applicable NRC limits in 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix I for offsite exposures, and will remain within the acceptable limits of 10 CFR 20 for occupational exposures. The actual releases at the BFN units will also remain within the FES estimates. Thus, the amendment does not significantly effect the amount or type of radiological plant effluents, and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the staff concludes that continued compliance with applicable Federal, State, and Local agency requirements relating to environmental protection will preclude any significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed uprate. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no significant 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 NRC staff considered denial of the proposed action (no action alternative). Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts and would reduce operational flexibility.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the FES dated September 1, 1972 for BFN Units 2 and 3.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on August 26, 1998, the NRC staff consulted with the Alabama State official, Mr. Kirk Whatley of the State Office of Radiation Control, 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 this action, see the application for amendment dated October 1, 1997, as supplemented October 14, 1997; and March 16 and 20, April 1 and 28, May 1, 20 and 22, June 12, 17 and 26, and July 17, 24, and 31, 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 Athens Public Library, 405 E. South Street, Athens, Alabama.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 26th day of August 1998.

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. 98–23458 Filed 8–31–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, September 2, 1998.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Wednesday, September 2

10:00 a.m.—Briefing on PRA Implementation Plan (Public Meeting) (Contact: Tom King, 301–415–5828)

11:30 a.m.—Affirmation Session (Public Meeting)

*(Please Note: This item will be affirmed immediately following the conclusion of the preceding meeting.)

a. Final Rule on Financial Assurance Requirements for Decommissioning Nuclear Power Reactors (Contact: Ken Hart, 301–415–1659)

*The Schedule for Commission Meetings is subject to change on short notice. To verify the status of meetings call (recording)—(301) 415–1292. Contact person for more information: Bill Hill (301) 415–1661.

The NRC Commission Meeting Schedule can be found on the Internet at: http://www.nrc.gov/SECY/smj/schedule.htm

This notice is distributed by mail to several hundred subscribers; if you no longer wish to receive it, or would like to be added to it, please contact the Office of the Secretary, Attn: Operations Branch, Washington, D.C. 20555 (301–415–1661). In addition, distribution of this meeting notice over the Internet system is available. If you are interested in receiving this Commission meeting schedule electronically, please send an electronic message to wmh@nrc.gov or dkw@nrc.gov.

William M. Hill, Jr.,

Secy Tracking Officer, Office of the Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98–23633 Filed 8–28–98; 11:31 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Weeks of August 31, September 7, 14, and 21, 1998.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED

Week of August 31

Wednesday, September 2

10:00 a.m.—Briefing on PRA Implementation Plan (PUBLIC MEETING) (Contact: Tom King, 301–415–5828)

11:30 a.m.—Affirmation session (PUBLIC MEETING)

*(PLEASE NOTE: This item will be affirmed immediately following the conclusion of the preceding meeting.)

a: Final Rule on Financial Assurance Requirements for Decommissioning Nuclear Power Reactors (Contact: Ken Hart, 301–415–1659)

Thursday, September 3

10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.—All Employees Meetings (PUBLIC MEETINGS) on ''The Green'' Plaza Area between buildings at White Flint (Contact: Cynthia Marcy—301–415–3133)

Week of September 7—Tentative

Thursday, September 10

3:30 p.m.—Affirmation Session (PUBLIC MEETING) (if needed)

Week of September 14—Tentative

Tuesday, September 15

2:00 p.m.—Briefing by Reactor Vendors Owners Groups (PUBLIC MEETING) (Contact: Bryan Sheron, 301–415–1274)

3:30 p.m.—Affirmation Session (PUBLIC MEETING) (if needed)

Thursday, September 17

9:00 a.m.—Briefing on Investigative Matters (Closed—Ex. 5 and 7)