NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Notice.

Title of Collection: NSF Proposal Review Process (OMB Control No. 3145–0060).

In compliance with the requirement of Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 for opportunity for public comment on proposed data collection projects, the National Science Foundation (NSF) will publish periodic summaries of proposed projects. To request more information on the proposed project or to obtain a copy of the data collection plans and instruments call Suzanne Plimpton, NSF Reports Clearance Officer, at (703) 306–1125x2017.

Comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Proposed Project Proposal Evaluation Process

The missions of the NSF are to: increase the Nation's base of scientific and engineering knowledge and strengthen its ability to support research in all areas of science and engineering; promote innovative science and engineering education programs that can better prepare the Nation to meet the challenges of the future; and promote international cooperation in science and engineering. The Foundation is also committed to ensuring the Nation's supply of scientists, engineers and science educators. In its role as leading Federal supporter of science and engineering, NSF also has an important role in national policy planning.

The Foundation fulfills this responsibility by initiating and supporting merit-selected research and education projects in all the scientific and engineering disciplines. This support is made primarily through grants, contracts, and other agreements awarded to approximately 2,000 colleges, universities, academic consortia, nonprofit institutions, and small businesses.

The Foundation relies heavily on the advice and assistance of external advisory committees, ad-hoc proposal reviewers, and to other experts to ensure that the Foundation is able to reach fair and knowledgeable judgments. These scientists and educators come from colleges and universities, nonprofit research and education organizations, industry, and other Government agencies.

In making its decisions on proposals the counsel of these merit reviewers has proven invaluable to the Foundation both in the identification of meritorious projects and in providing sound basis for project restructuring.

Review of proposals may involve large panel sessions, small groups, or use of a mail-review system. Proposals are reviewed carefully by scientists or engineers who are expert in the particular field represented by the proposal. About one-fourth are reviewed by mail reviewed by mail reviewers alone. Another one-fourth are reviewed exclusively by panels of reviewers who gather, usually in Arlington, VA, to discuss their advice as well as to deliver it. The remaining one-half are reviewed first by mail reviewers expert in the particular field, then by panels, usually of persons with more diverse expertise, who help the NSF decide among proposals from multiple fields or sub-fields.

Use of the Information

The information collected is used to support grant programs of the Foundation. The information collected on the proposal evaluation forms is used by the Foundation to determine the following criteria when awarding or declining proposals submitted to the Agency: (1) What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity? (2) What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

The information collected on reviewer background questionnaires is used by managers to maintain an automated database of reviewers for the many disciplines represented by the proposals submitted to the Foundation. Information collected on gender, race, ethnicity is used in meeting NSF needs for data to permit response to Congressional and other queries into equity issues. These data are also used in the design, implementation, and monitoring of NSF efforts to increase the participation of various groups in science, engineering, and education.

Confidentiality

Verbatim but anonymous copies of reviews are sent to the principal investigators/project directors. Subject to this NSF policy and applicable laws, including the Freedom of Information Act, reviewers' comments will be given maximum protection from disclosure.

While listings of panelists' names are released, the names of individual reviewers, associated with individual proposals, are not released to anyone.

Because the Foundation is committed to monitoring and identifying any real or apparent inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of the proposed principal investigator(s)/project director(s) or the co-principal investigator(s)/co-project director(s), the Foundation also collects information regarding race, ethnicity, disability, and gender. This information is also protected by the Privacy Act.

Burden on the Public

The Foundation estimates that anywhere from one hour to twenty hours may be required to review a proposal. It is estimated that approximately five hours are required to review an average proposal. Each proposal receives an average of seven reviews.

Send comments to Suzanne Plimpton, Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 295, Arlington, VA 22230. Written comments should be received by December 30, 1998.

Dated: October 30, 1998.

Mary Lou Higgs,

Acting NSF Reports Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 98–29604 Filed 11–4–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555–01–M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–335, 50–389]

Florida Power & LIght Company; 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 or NRC) is considering issuance of amendments to Facility Operating License Nos. DPR–67 and NPF–16, issued to Florida Power & Light Company (the licensee), for operation of the St. Lucie Plant, Units 1 and 2, respectively, that are located in St. Lucie County, Florida.

The proposed amendments would revise the terminology used in the St. Lucie Plant Technical Specifications (TSs) relative to the implementation and automatic removal of certain reactor protection system trip bypasses to

ensure that the meaning of explicit terms used in the TSs are consistent with the intent of the stated requirements.

The circumstances surrounding this request support an exigent TS amendment process. St. Lucie Unit 2 is scheduled to enter their 10th refueling outage on November 9, 1998. The licensee currently plans to begin the Unit 2 startup activities on December 1, 1998. The staff finds that there are sufficient time restraints in the schedule, and with the current TSs, the reactor could not be started up without exposing the plant to the risk of unnecessary reactor trips. Therefore, this amendment request will be handled on an exigent basis.

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.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.91(a)(6) for amendments to be granted under exigent circumstances, the NRC staff must determine 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. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

(1) Operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed amendments are administrative in nature, and do not change the function or the setpoints of the RPS trip bypass features. The revisions simply make corrections to the Notation of TS Tables 2.2–1 and 3.3–1 to ensure that the meaning of explicit terms used in the Notes is consistent with the intent of the stated requirements based on the St. Lucie plant design. The proposed technical specification changes do not involve accident initiators, do not change the configuration or method of operation of any plant equipment that is used to mitigate the consequences of an accident, and do not alter any conditions assumed in the plant accident analyses. Therefore, operation of either facility in accordance with its proposed amendment would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

(2) Operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The proposed amendments are administrative in nature and will not change the physical plant or the modes of plant operation defined in the Facility Operating Licenses. The changes do not involve the addition or modification of equipment nor do they alter the design or operation of plant systems. Therefore, operation of either facility in accordance with its proposed amendment would not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

(3) Operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The proposed amendments are administrative in nature and do not change the function or the setpoints of the RPS trip bypass features. The revisions simply make corrections to the Notation of TS Tables 2.2–1 and 3.3–1 to ensure that the meaning of explicit terms used in the Notes is consistent with the intent of the stated requirements based on the St. Lucie plant design. The proposed changes do not alter the basis for any technical specification that is related to the establishment of, or the maintenance of, a nuclear safety margin. Therefore, operation of either facility in accordance with its proposed amendment would not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

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 14 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 14-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 14-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 and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative 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 6D59, 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 November 19, 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 Indian River Community College Library, 3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida 34981–5596. 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 the amendment is issued before the expiration of the 30-day hearing period, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. If a hearing is requested, 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, or 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 M.S. Ross, Florida Power & Light Company, P.O. Box 14000, Juno Beach, FL, 33408–0420, 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 October 29, 1998, 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 Indian River Community College Library, 3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida 34981–5596.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 30th day of October 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

William C. Gleaves,

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

[FR Doc. 98–29642 Filed 11–4–98; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–302]

Florida Power Corporation et al. (Crystal River Unit 3); Exemption

I

The Florida Power Corporation et al. (FPC or the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR–72, which authorizes the operation of Crystal River Unit 3. The license states that the licensee is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

The facility consists of a pressurized-water reactor at the licensee's site located in Citrus County, Florida.

II

The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix K, Section I.D.1, ''Single Failure Criterion,'' requires that accident evaluations use the combination of emergency core cooling system (ECCS) subsystems assumed to be operative ''after the most damaging single-failure of ECCS equipment has taken place.'' The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the single-failure requirement for very-low-probability scenarios under certain circumstances. The exemption is limited to the systems required for preventing boron precipitation during the long-term cooling phase of a loss-of-coolant accident (LOCA). 10 CFR 50.46(b)(5) requires that the ECCS be capable of providing long-term core cooling. Post-accident boron precipitation is a potential, but unlikely, challenge to maintaining long-term core cooling.

By letter dated October 31, 1997, as supplemented by letters dated December 13, 1997, February 27, 1998, and April 24, 1998, FPC requested an amendment to its operating license for Crystal River Unit 3. The FPC amendment request addressed prevention of boron precipitation following a LOCA that involved the following:

(1) Reactor vessel vent valves (RVVVs) that are effective when needed for all LOCA conditions except for (a) some LOCAs between the reactor coolant pumps and the reactor vessel (RV) at an elevation below the cold-leg mid-pipe at the junction with the RV and (b) decay heat generation rate comparable to approximately a month following extended operation at full power for some LOCAs.

(2) If the RVVVs are not effective, then, according to the licensee's