3. The proposed amendment will not result in a significant construction impact.

The proposed change will not result in any construction, nor will this change effect any planned or existing construction project, therefore, there will be no construction impact.

4. The proposed amendment will not result in a significant increase in the potential for, or radiological or chemical consequences from, previously analyzed accidents.

The proposed amendment does not involve any need for cleaning of additional HEU cylinders and will not result in a significant increase in the potential for, or radiological or chemical consequences from, previously analyzed accidents.

5. The proposed amendment will not result in the possibility of a new or different kind of accident.

The proposed amendment only involves extensions of the PORTS Compliance Plan completion dates. Therefore, this change will not result in the possibility of a new or different kind of accident.

6. The proposed amendment will not result in a significant reduction in any margin of safety.

The proposed amendment only involves extensions of the PORTS Compliance Plan completion dates. Therefore, the proposed change does not represent a reduction in any margin of safety.

7. The proposed amendment will not result in an overall decrease in the effectiveness of the plant's safety, safeguards or security programs.

Currently, at PORTS, the X–705 West Annex is the only area leased by USEC from DOE which has not been certified by the NRC. Based on the agreement signed between DOE and USEC on October 11, 1995, the Regulatory Oversight Agreement between DOE and USEC is required to apply to all areas leased by USEC from DOE but not certified by the NRC. As such, operations in the X–705 West Annex will continue to be conducted under regulation of the ROA until the HEU cylinder cleaning operations have been completed and the X–705 West Annex is certified by the NRC. While the ROA is in effect, DOE staff has informed the NRC staff, that they will maintain regulatory staff in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and a resident inspector at PORTS, to ensure that HEU cylinder cleaning is conducted in a safe and secure manner. In addition, the NRC staff has also reviewed the controls in place in the X–705 West Annex, which are relied upon by USEC to prevent it from exceeding the NRC-possession limits by accidentally transferring significant quantities of HEU from the X–705 West Annex to NRC-certified areas. The NRC staff has determined these controls, as well as DOE's regulatory oversight of the X–705 West Annex operations, to be sufficient for preventing USEC from exceeding its possession limits in NRC-certified areas at PORTS. Therefore, the Compliance Plan date extensions will not result in undue risk to the public health and safety, common defense and security, or the environment.

Effective date: The amendment to GDP–2 will become effective upon issuance by NRC.

Certificate of Compliance No. GDP–2: This amendment will revise Issue A.4 of the PORTS Compliance Plan.

Local Public Document Room location: Portsmouth Public Library, 1220 Gallia Street, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 2d day of December, 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Carl J. Paperiello,

Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 98–32637 Filed 12–8–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–160]

Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia Tech Research Reactor; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC) is considering issuance of an exemption from the requirements of its regulations to Facility Operating License No. R–97, a license held by the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech or the licensee). The exemption would apply to the Georgia Tech Research Reactor (GTRR), a shutdown and defueled facility located in Atlanta, Georgia.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed exemption would eliminate emergency response plan requirements due to the shutdown and defueled status of the GTRR facility.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated August 20, 1998. The requested action would grant an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.54(q) for emergency planning.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The nuclear fuel was removed from the GTRR in February 1996. By NRC License Amendment No. 12, dated April 2, 1998, the authority to operate the reactor was removed and the licensee was authorized to possess the residual by-product material. The tritiated heavy water was removed from the facility in July 1998. In this shutdown and defueled condition, the facility poses a reduced risk to public health and safety. Because of this reduced risk, the requirements of 10 CFR 50.54(q) are no longer required. An exemption is required from 10 CFR 50.54(q) to allow the licensee to drop the requirement to maintain and implement the Emergency Plan for the GTRR.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action

Before issuing the proposed exemption, the Commission will have concluded that the granting of the exemption from certain portions of 10 CFR 50.54(q) is acceptable, as describe in the exemption. The proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in occupational or public radiation exposure. Therefore, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the exemption 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 Georgia Tech Research Reactor.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on November 25, 1998, the NRC staff has consulted with Mr. Thomas Hill of the State of Georgia, Radioactive Materials Program, Department of Natural Resources, regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The State official had no comment regarding environmental impacts of the proposed action.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of 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 licensee letter dated August 20, 1998, which is available for public review at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of December 1998.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Seymour H. Weiss,

Director, Non-Power Reactors and Decommissioning Project Directorate, Division of Reactor Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 98–32638 Filed 12–8–98; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–309]

Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company, Maine Yankee Atomic 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 the requirements of 10 CFR 50.54(w) and 10 CFR 140.11(a)(4) regarding financial protection requirements to Facility Operating License No. DPR–36, a license held by the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company (MYAPCo or the licensee). The exemption would apply to the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station, a permanently shutdown plant located at the MYAPC site in Lincoln County, Maine.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would grant an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 50.54(w) regarding the amount of onsite property insurance required for the licensee and from the requirements of 140.11(a)(4) regarding the amount of offsite property insurance required for the licensee. The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated January 20, 1998. The requested action would allow MYAPCo to reduce onsite insurance coverage to $50 million and offsite coverage to $100 million. In addition, MYAPCo would be allowed to withdraw from the secondary liability coverage of requirements of 10 CFR 140.11(a)(4).

Need for the Proposed Action

Maine Yankee was shut down in December 1996. By letter dated August 7, 1997, the licensee informed the Commission that it had decided to permanently cease operations at Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station and that all fuel had been permanently removed from the reactor. In accordance with 10 CFR 50.82(a)(2), upon docketing of the certifications in the letter of August 7, 1997, the facility operating license no longer authorizes MYAPCo to operate the reactor and to load fuel in the reactor vessel. In this permanently shutdown condition, the facility poses a reduced risk to public health and safety.

The proposed exemption is needed because the licensee's required insurance coverage significantly exceeds the potential cost consequences of radiological incidents possible at a permanently shutdown and defueled nuclear power plant that has cooled more than 21 months. Since Maine Yankee no longer contributes as great a risk as does an operating plant, this reduction in risk should be reflected in the indemnification requirements to which the licensee is subject. Approval of this request would allow a more equitable allocation of financial risk.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action

The NRC's evaluation of the proposed exemption from 10 CFR 50.54(w) and 10 CFR 140.11(a)(4) indicates that issuance of the proposed exemption is an administrative action that will not have any environmental impact. The licensee maintains and operates the plant in a configuration necessary to support the safe storage of spent fuel and to comply with the facility operating license and NRC's rules and regulations.

No changes are being made in the types or amounts of any radiological effluents that may be released off site. There is no significant increase in occupational or public 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 exemption does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other nonradiological environmental impact.

Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that there is no significant environmental impact associated with the proposed exemption, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to the action would be to deny the request, thereby requiring the licensee to maintain insurance coverage required of an operating plant (no-action alternative); such an action would not enhance the protection of the environment. Denial of the application would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The impacts of the proposed action and the alternative are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to operation of Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station, (July 1972).

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on October 1, 1998, the NRC staff consulted with Mr. Patrick Dostie of the State of Maine, Department of Human Services, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. He did not object to issuance of the exemption.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the staff concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

Accordingly, the Commission will not prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.