material is not required. A final rule to revise this regulation has not yet been issued by the Commission.

The review of the applicant's SAR showed that credit was taken for only 75% of the original neutron absorbing material being present and that the neutron flux produced by the spent nuclear fuel would deplete only a small percentage of neutron absorbing material during the expected life of this facility. The neutron absorbing material (poison) is in a form that exposure to the ambient atmosphere of the basket interior will not cause a significant deterioration of the structural properties of the material over the expected life of the facility.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since there is no significant environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact are not evaluated. The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny approval of the 10 CFR 72.124(b) exemption and, therefore, not allow elimination of the requirement to verify the continued efficacy of neutron absorbing materials. This alternative would have the same or greater environmental impacts.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

On March 1, 1999, Adam Bless from the Oregon Office of Energy was contacted about this EA for the proposed action and had no concerns.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51. Based upon the foregoing EA, the Commission finds that the proposed action of granting an exemption from 10 CFR 72.124(b) will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

This application was docketed under 10 CFR Part 72, Docket 72–17. For further details with respect to this action, see the application for an ISFSI license dated March 26, 1996, and the request for exemption dated March 20, 1997, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555, and the Local Public Document Room at the Portland State University, Branford Price Millar Library, 934 SW Harrison, Portland, Oregon 97207.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 24th day of March 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

E. William Brach,

Director, Spent Fuel Project Office, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[DOCKET 72–17]

Portland General Electric Company; Issuance of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact Regarding the Proposed Exemption From Certain Requirements of 10 CFR Part 72

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption, pursuant to 10 CFR 72.7, from certain requirements of 10 CFR 72.70(a), to Portland General Electric Company (PGE). Exemption from portions of 10 CFR 72.70(a) would release PGE from submitting the final Safety Analysis Report (SAR) at least 90 days prior to the receipt of fuel at its independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) at the Trojan Nuclear Plant (Docket Nos. 72–17 and 50–344) in Columbia County, Oregon.

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Identification of Proposed Action

By letter dated February 9, 1999, PGE requested an exemption from the requirement in 10 CFR 72.70(a) which states, in part, that the ''. . . information submitted in the Safety Analysis Report shall be updated and submitted to the Commission ''. . . with final Safety Analysis Report completion and submittal to the Commission at least 90 days prior to the planned receipt of spent fuel . . .''

The proposed action before the Commission is whether to grant this exemption under 10 CFR 72.7 to release PGE from submitting the final SAR to NRC 90 days prior to receipt of spent fuel at the Trojan ISFSI in accordance with 10 CFR 72.70(a).

Need for the Proposed Action

The exemption from 10 CFR 72.70(a) is necessary because, while PGE has submitted all major changes to the SAR within the 90-day limit, a number of minor changes have been submitted in a timeframe that would not permit PGE to receive spent fuel at the ISFSI on its planned schedule if it must comply with the 90-day limit. A delay of 90 days to receive fuel at the Trojan ISFSI would cause an unnecessary burden to PGE.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

PGE last submitted a major revision to the SAR on October 31, 1998. Since that time PGE has submitted several minor changes to the SAR. NRC staff has reviewed all SAR changes through March 11, 1999, in consideration for issuing PGE a license, pursuant to 10 CFR Part 72, to operate an ISFSI at Trojan Nuclear Plant. Therefore, the staff has concluded that a period of 90 days would not be required to review the final SAR. Based on the review of the Trojan ISFSI SAR as supplemented through March 11, 1999, the staff further concluded that a period of 5 days would be sufficient to review the final SAR and, if necessary, take additional regulatory action prior to PGE receiving fuel at the Trojan ISFSI. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed exemption will have no significant environmental impacts.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

Since there is no significant environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact are not evaluated. The alternative to the proposed action would be to deny approval of the 10 CFR 72.70(a) exemption and require the final SAR update at least 90 days before the receipt of spent fuel at the ISFSI. This alternative would also have no significant environmental impact.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

On March 1, 1999, Adam Bless from the Oregon Office of Energy was contacted about this EA for the proposed action and had no concerns.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been reviewed in accordance with the requirements set forth in 10 CFR Part 51. Based upon the foregoing EA, granting an exemption from 10 CFR 72.70(a) to release PGE from submitting the final SAR at least 90 days prior to the receipt of fuel at its ISFSI at the Trojan Nuclear Plant and instead require the final SAR be submitted at least 5 days prior to the receipt of fuel at the Trojan ISFSI will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed exemption.

This application was docketed under 10 CFR Part 72, Docket 72–17. For further details with respect to this

action, see the application for an ISFSI license dated March 26, 1996, and the request for exemption dated February 9, 1999, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20555, and the Local Public Document Room at the Portland State University, Branford Price Millar Library, 934 SW Harrison, Portland, Oregon 97207.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 24th day of March 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

E. William Brach,

Director, Spent Fuel Project Office, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–482]

Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation; Wolf Creek Generating Station; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering the issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. NPF–42 that was issued to Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation (the licensee) for operation of the Wolf Creek Generating Station (WCGS), located in Coffey County, Kansas.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed amendment will revise the current Technical Specifications (CTS) for WCGS in their entirety based on the guidance provided in NUREG–1431, ''Standard Technical Specifications, Westinghouse Plants,'' Revision 1, dated April 1995, and in the Commission's ''Final Policy Statement on Technical Specifications Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors,'' published on July 22, 1993 (58 FR 39132). The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's amendment request dated May 15, 1997, as supplemented by (1) the letters in 1998 dated June 30, August 5, August 28, September 24, October 16, October 23, November 24, December 2, December 17, and December 21, and (2) the letters in 1999 dated February 4 and March 5 (3 letters).

The Need for the Proposed Action

It has been recognized that nuclear safety in all nuclear power plants would benefit from an improvement and standardization of plant Technical Specifications (TS). The NRC's ''Interim Policy Statement on Technical Specification Improvements for Nuclear Power Plants,'' (52 FR 3788) contained proposed criteria for defining the scope of TS. Later, the NRC's ''FinalPolicy Statement on Technical Specifications Improvements for Nuclear Power Reactors,'' published on July 22, 1993 (58 FR 39132), incorporated lessons learned since publication of the interim policy statement and formed the basis for revisions to 10 CFR 50.36, ''Technical Specifications.'' The ''Final Rule'' (60 FR 36953) codified criteria for determining the content of TS. To facilitate the development of standard TS for nuclear power reactors, each power reactor vendor owners' group (OG) and the NRC staff developed standard TS. For WCGS, the Improved Standard Technical Specifications (ISTS) are in NUREG–1431. This document formed the basis for the WCGS Improved Technical Specifications (ITS) conversion. The NRC Committee to Review Generic Requirements (CRGR) reviewed the ISTS, made note of its safety merits, and indicated its support of the conversion by operating plants to the ISTS.

Description of the Proposed Change

The proposed changes to the CTS are based on NUREG–1431 and on guidance provided by the Commission in its Final Policy Statement. The objective of the changes is to completely rewrite, reformat, and streamline the CTS (i.e., to convert the CTS to the ITS). Emphasis is placed on human factors principles to improve clarity and understanding of the TS. The Bases section of the ITS has been significantly expanded to clarify and better explain the purpose and foundation of each specification. In addition to NUREG–1431, portions of the CTS were also used as the basis for the development of the WCGS ITS. Plant-specific issues (e.g., unique design features, requirements, and operating practices) were discussed with the licensee, and generic matters with Westinghouse and other OGs.

This conversion is a joint effort in concert with three other utilities: Pacific Gas & Electric Company for Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Units 1 and 2 (Docket Nos. 50–275 and 50–323); TU Electric for Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station, Units 1 and 2 (Docket Nos. 50–445 and 50–446); and Union Electric Company for Callaway Plant, Unit 1 (Docket No. 50–483). It was a goal of the four utilities to make the ITS for all the plants as similar as possible. This joint effort includes a common methodology for the licensees in marking-up the CTS and NUREG–1431 specifications, and the NUREG–1431 Bases, that has been accepted by the staff.

This common methodology is discussed at the end of Enclosure 2, ''Mark-Up of Current TS''; Enclosure 5a, ''Mark-Up of NUREG–1431 Specifications''; and Enclosure 5b, ''Mark-Up of NUREG–1431 Bases'', for each of the 14 separate ITS sections that were submitted with the licensee's application. Each of the 14 ITS sections also includes the following enclosures:

- Enclosure 1, ''Cross-Reference Table,'' provides the cross-reference table connecting each CTS specification (i.e., limiting condition for operation, required action, or surveillance requirement) to the associated ITS specification, sorted by both CTS and ITS specifications.
- Enclosures 3A and 3B, ''Description of Changes to Current TS'' and ''Conversion Comparison Table,'' provides the description of the changes to the CTS section and the comparison table showing which plants (of the four licensees in the joint effort) that each change applies.
- Enclosure 4, ''No Significant Hazards Considerations,'' provides the no significant hazards consideration (NHSC) of 10 CFR 50.91 for the changes to the CTS. A description of the NSHC organization is provided, followed by generic NHSCs for administrative, more restrictive, relocation, and moving-out-of-CTS changes, and individual NHSCs for less restrictive changes.
- Enclosures 6A and 6B, ''Differences From NUREG–1431'' and ''Conversion Comparison Table,'' provides the descriptions of the differences from NUREG–1431 specifications and the comparison table showing which plants (of the four licensees in the joint effort) that each difference applies.

The common methodology includes the convention that, if the words in a CTS specification are not the same as the words in the ITS specification, but the CTS words have the same meaning or have the same requirements as the words in the ITS specification, then the licensees do not have to indicate or describe a change to the CTS. In general, only technical changes have been identified; however, some non-technical changes have also been identified. The portion of any specification which is being deleted is struck through (i.e., the deletion is annotated using the strike-out feature of the word processing computer program or crossed out by hand). Any text being added to a specification is shown by shading the text, placing a circle around the new