5. Postal Rate Commission (N1–458–96–4). Compliance statements, notices, orders, comments and visit records maintained outside of official docket files.

Dated: November 22, 1996.

James W. Moore,

Assistant Archivist for Records Administration.

[FR Doc. 96–30938 Filed 12–4–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7515–01–M

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Reporting Statistics—Airlines

AGENCY: National Transportation Safety Board.

ACTION: Notice of proposed statistical reporting changes and request for comment.

SUMMARY: The NTSB has developed a proposed system for classifying airline accidents based upon the severity of their consequences. An improved classification system that provides more meaningful measures of the level of safety of airline transportation is required by the FAA Reauthorization Act. This notice provides a description of the proposed classification system and of several additional accident parameters that the NTSB intends to publish. Many of the statistics focus on passenger injuries.

DATES: The law to which this action is a response was signed by the President on October 9, 1996, and requires that the NTSB complete development of the new classification system by January 7, 1997. Comments are due December 16, 1996. The NTSB will attempt to consider comments received after that date, as staff time and resources permit.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be submitted either by electronic mail (AirStats@ntsb.gov) or by other means to: Analysis and Data Division (R–50), ATTN: Airline Statistics, National Transportation Safety Board, 490 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20594–2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stan Smith (202) 314–6550.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NTSB believes that its proposal is fully responsive to the law, and in fact exceeds its requirements. There is no intention to change the definition of an accident (''an occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight and all such persons have disembarked, and in which any person suffers death or serious injury, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage'').

Airline safety statistics that the NTSB published in recent years include: the number of accidents and fatal accidents; overall and fatal accident rates using flight hours, departures, and miles as normalizing factors; and the numbers of fatalities aboard and total. These statistics have been presented for each year of a several-year series. None of the statistics, taken alone can be considered an accurate measure of airline safety and can be misleading. For example, some fatal accidents involving only ground crew fatalities pose no threat to the aircraft or its occupants. Yet the fatal accident statistics have counted such accidents equal to those resulting in the total destruction of an aircraft with no survivors.

While the NTSB has found no single index that perfectly indicates the state of airline safety, it believes the new classification system is an improvement over the current statistics. For each safety statistic described herein, the NTSB has developed sample charts using historical data, estimated data, and partial-year data for 1996. These samples are available at the above address, Room 5111, and on the NTSB world wide web site (http://www.ntsb.gov).

a. Accident Severity Classification for Airline Accidents

In the proposed classification system below, each accident involving a Part 121 aircraft is placed into one of four mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories. If an accident involves more than one Part 121 aircraft, the accident is placed into the category appropriate to the most severe consequences to any of those aircraft. Such an accident counts only once (rather than counting once for each of the Part 121 aircraft involved.) The four accident categories, defined in terms of the injuries and aircraft damage that resulted from the accident are:

I. ''Major'' Accident—an accident in which any of three conditions is met: (1) a Part 121 aircraft was destroyed, (2) there were multiple fatalities, or (3) there was one fatality and a Part 121 aircraft was substantially damaged.

II. ''Severe'' Accident—an accident in which at least one of two conditions is met: (1) there was one fatality without substantial damage to a Part 121 aircraft, or (2) there was at least one serious injury and a Part 121 aircraft was substantially damaged.

III. ''Injury'' Accident—a nonfatal accident with at least one serious injury and without substantial damage to a Part 121 aircraft. *(These often involve abrupt maneuvers, turbulence, evacuation, or scalding.)*

IV. ''Damage'' Accident—an accident in which no person was killed or seriously injured, but in which any aircraft was substantially damaged.

The NTSB reports the numbers of accidents in each category and corresponding accident rates per flight hour and/or departure. These statistics are reported for the industry as a whole and not by airline, aircraft type, etc. The Board believes that accident statistics reported in the form described above will be useful to the aviation safety community, the press, and the public in assessing the state of aviation safety.

B. Destroyed Aircraft Statistics for Airline Accidents

The NTSB reports the number of destroyed aircraft and the corresponding rate by hours and/or departures. These statistics are reported for U.S. airline operations as a whole and are not reported by airline, aircraft type, etc. Accident statistics reported in this form are expected to be of particular interest to the aviation safety community, but will be useful to the press and the public in understanding the state of aviation safety.

C. Passenger Injury Statistics for Passenger Operations of Airlines

The NTSB reports numbers of fatally- and seriously-injured passengers and their corresponding passenger injury rates by passenger miles and/or passenger enplanements. Rates will be reported inversely to the way they are customarily presented—for example, passenger miles per fatality rather than fatalities per million passenger miles. We believe that this convention will have greater meaning to the typical consumer of the information. These statistics are reported for U.S. airline passenger operations as a whole and are not reported by airline, aircraft type, etc. Passenger injury statistics reported in this form are expected to be particularly useful to the press and the public in assessing aviation safety, and will be another safety indicator of interest to the aviation community.

D. Passenger Fatality Accident List

The NTSB publishes a list of accidents that caused passenger fatalities aboard U.S. airlines. The list includes the airline, the aircraft model, and the number of passenger fatalities and survivors.

E. Passenger Fatality Time Line

The NTSB publishes a graphical portrayal of passenger fatalities aboard

U.S. airlines. This graphic shows at a glance the number of passenger fatalities and the time between the accidents that caused them.

Issued in Washington, DC on this 29th day of November, 1996.

Jim Hall,

Chairman.

[FR Doc. 96–30936 Filed 11–4–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7533–01–M

Sunshine Act Meeting

ACTION: Cancellation of Oral Argument.

''FEDERAL REGISTER'' CITATION OF PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENT: Vol. 61, No. 224/Tuesday, November 19, 1996/ Notices.

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED TIME AND DATE: 3:00 p.m., November 25, 1996.

SUMMARY: The National Transportation Safety Board gives notice that the oral argument in a consolidated case pending before the Board was cancelled. The Cases, SE–13961–3, *Administrator* v. *Willette,* et al., involve the applicability of the Federal Aviation's Advisory Circular 120–56, ''Air Carrier Voluntary Disclosure Reporting Procedures,'' to individual airmen and crew.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Althea Walker, (202) 314–6080.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: No early announcement of the cancellation was possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Bea Hardesty, (202) 382–6525.

Dated: December 3, 1996.

Bea Hardesty,

Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 96–31151 Filed 12–3–96; 4:00 pm]

BILLING CODE 7533–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–282, 50–306, and 72–10]

Northern States Power Company, Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2, License Nos. DPR–42, DPR–60 and SNM–2506, Issuance of Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206

Notice is hereby given that the Acting Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, has issued a Director's Decision concerning a Petition dated June 5, 1995, filed by the Nuclear Information and Resource Service and the Prairie Island Coalition Against Nuclear Storage (Petitioners) under § 2.206 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR 2.206). The Petition requested that Prairie Island Units 1 and 2 be immediately shut down and the operating licenses be suspended until the issues raised in the Petition could be resolved. The Petition was based on alleged problems with cracking of the Prairie Island steam generator tubes and reactor vessel head penetrations, use of the transfer channel between the reactor core and the fuel pool during unloading and loading of dry cask storage units, and use of the Prairie Island crane.

The Acting Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation has determined that the Petition should be denied for the reasons stated in the ''Director's Decision Under 10 CFR 2.206'' (DD–96–21), the complete text of which follows this notice. In reaching this decision, the Acting Director considered the concerns expressed by the Petitioners in letters to the NRC dated June 21, 1995, February 19, 1996 and March 13, 1996. The decision and the documents cited in the decision are available for public inspection and copying in 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, MN 55401.

A copy of this decision has been filed with the Secretary of the Commission for the Commission's review in accordance with 10 CFR 2.206(c). As provided therein, this decision will become the final action of the Commission 25 days after issuance unless the Commission, on its own motion, institutes review of the decision within that time.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 27th day of November, 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,

Frank J. Miraglia,

Acting Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

DIRECTOR'S DECISION UNDER 10 CFR 2.206

I. Introduction

On June 5, 1995, the Nuclear Information and Resource Service and the Prairie Island Coalition Against Nuclear Storage (PICANS), now known as the Prairie Island Coalition (Petitioners), filed a Petition pursuant to Section 2.206 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR 2.206) requesting that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) immediately suspend the operating licenses for Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2, operated by Northern States Power Company (NSP or Licensee).

II. Background

As a basis for their request, Petitioners presented four concerns which are summarized as follows: (1) The Prairie Island steam generators are suffering from tube degradation and may rupture unless proper testing is conducted and corrective actions are taken; (2) the Prairie Island reactor vessel head penetrations (VHPs) have stress-corrosion cracks which, if not found and corrected, may result in a catastrophic accident involving the reactor control rods; (3) plans for loading and unloading of dry cask storage units in an emergency, which include storage of irradiated components in the fuel transfer canal, were not properly reviewed by NRC and do not satisfy NRC requirements; and, (4) the physical integrity of the Prairie Island crane used to lift the dry cask for Prairie Island's spent fuel requires physical testing and a safety analysis before future crane use following its handling of a heavy load for an extended period of time.

By a letter dated June 19, 1995, the Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) denied the Petitioners' request for immediate suspension of Prairie Island Units 1 and 2 licenses. The Director stated that the NRC staff's review of the Petition did not identify any safety issues warranting immediate action at the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant. The Director also stated that the NRC staff would issue a Director's Decision addressing Petitioners' concerns within a reasonable time.

PICANS submitted a letter to the Chairman of the NRC dated June 21, 1995, which reiterated the concerns raised in the Petition and requested an evening public hearing within the vicinity of the Prairie Island facility. In a July 12, 1995, response, the NRC staff informed PICANS that an evening public hearing was not warranted at that time but that the request would again be considered at the time of issuance of the Director's Decision.[1] PICANS was further informed that the concerns raised in the June 21, 1995, letter would be addressed in the Director's Decision.

On February 19, 1996, Petitioners filed an addendum to their Petition raising further concerns regarding steam generator tube cracking and requested that Prairie Island, Unit 1 not be allowed to return to operation until

[1] For the reasons set out in the cover letter transmitting this Decision, the NRC staff has again determined that an evening public hearing is not warranted.