

responsible individuals for determining the cause of the alarm, and to place radiation survey instruments in accessible locations for use in such an emergency.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated July 2, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of 10 CFR 70.24(a) is to ensure that if a criticality were to occur during the handling of special nuclear material, personnel would be alerted to that fact and would take appropriate action. At a commercial nuclear power plant the inadvertent criticality with which 10 CFR 70.24(a) is concerned could occur during fuel handling operations. The special nuclear material that could be assembled into a critical mass at a commercial nuclear power plant is in the form of nuclear fuel; the quantity of other forms of special nuclear material that is stored on site in any given location is small enough to preclude achieving a critical mass. Because the fuel is not enriched beyond 5.0 weight percent Uranium-235 and because commercial nuclear plant licensees have procedures and design features that prevent inadvertent criticality, the staff has determined that it is unlikely that an inadvertent criticality could occur due to the handling of special nuclear material at a commercial power reactor. The requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(a), therefore, are not necessary to ensure the safety of personnel during the handling of special nuclear materials at commercial power reactors.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that there is no significant environmental impact if the exemption is granted. Inadvertent or accidental criticality will be precluded through compliance with the Palisades Technical Specifications (TS), the design of the fuel storage racks providing geometric spacing of fuel assemblies in their storage locations, and administrative controls imposed on fuel handling procedures. TS requirements specify reactivity limits for the fuel storage racks and minimum spacing between the fuel assemblies in the storage racks.

Appendix A of 10 CFR Part 50, "General Design Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants," Criterion 62, requires that criticality in the fuel storage and handling system shall be prevented by physical systems or processes, preferably by use of geometrically safe

configurations. This is met at Palisades, as identified in the TS and the Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR).

Palisades TS section 5.4.1, "New Fuel Storage," states that the center-to-center spacing in the new fuel storage array is sufficient so that K_{eff} will not exceed 0.95 where fuel rods of the maximum allowable enrichment are in place and optimum moderation is assumed.

The proposed exemption would not result in any significant radiological impacts. The proposed exemption would not affect radiological plant effluents nor cause any significant occupational exposures since the TS, design controls (including geometric spacing of fuel assembly storage spaces), and administrative controls preclude inadvertent criticality. The amount of radioactive waste would not be changed by the proposed exemption.

The proposed exemption does not result in any significant nonradiological environmental impacts. The proposed exemption involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that there is no measurable 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 staff considered denial of the requested exemption. Denial of the request 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 Related to the Operation of Palisades Nuclear Generating Plant" dated June 1972.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on September 18, 1997, the staff consulted with the Michigan State official, Dennis Hahn, of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division, 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 the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated July 2, 1997, 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 Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan 49423.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this day of October 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Robert G. Schaaf,

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

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Integrated Review of the NRC Assessment Processes for Operating Commercial Nuclear Reactors; Meeting

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is holding a meeting to provide brief overviews of their planned Integrated Review of the NRC Assessment Process for Operating Commercial Nuclear Reactors, planned improvements to the current Senior Management Meeting (SMM) process, and to provide members of the public, including Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) and Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) representatives, an opportunity to provide early input and comments on these efforts. The meeting is open to the public and all interested parties may attend and provide comments.

DATES: November 6, 1997, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Nuclear Regulatory Commission, One White Flint North, Room 6-B11, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Louis Gamberoni, Mail Stop O-12-E4, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory

Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Telephone: (301) 415-1144; Internet: DLG2@NRC.GOV.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NRC has initiated a comprehensive review of its processes for assessing the safety performance of operating commercial nuclear power plants. These processes include plant performance reviews, Systematic Assessments of Licensee Performance (SALP), and Senior Management Meetings. The review is described in SECY-97-122, "Integrated Review of the NRC Assessment Process for Operating Commercial Nuclear Reactors." In addition, the NRC has initiated improvement actions for the current Senior Management Meeting process. A meeting is being held with members of the public (including NEI and UCS) to seek comments on these efforts. A preliminary agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Integrated Review of Assessment Process, presented by NRC
2. SMM Improvements Actions, presented by NRC
3. Comment period

Attendees are requested to notify David Louis Gamberoni at (301) 415-1144 of their planned attendance if special services are necessary.

The NRC is accessible to the White Flint Metro Station. Visitor parking near the NRC buildings is limited.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 20th day of October, 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Richard W. Borchardt,

Chief, Inspection Program Branch, Division of Inspection and Support Programs, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 97-28261 Filed 10-23-97; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards Meeting of the ACRS Subcommittee on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment

The ACRS Subcommittee on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment will hold a meeting on November 13-14, 1997, Room T-2B3, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

The entire meeting will be open to public attendance.

The agenda for the subject meeting shall be as follows:

Thursday, November 13, 1997—8:30 a.m. until the conclusion of business
Friday, November 14, 1997—8:30 a.m. until the conclusion of business

The Subcommittee will continue its review of the proposed final Standard Review Plan (SRP) sections and associated Regulatory Guides for risk-informed, performance-based regulation. If needed, the Subcommittee may also continue its review of the matter included in the Staff Requirements Memorandum dated May 27, 1997, regarding the use of uncertainty versus point values in the PRA-related regulatory decisionmaking process. The purpose of this meeting is to gather information, analyze relevant issues and facts, and to formulate proposed positions and actions, as appropriate, for deliberation by the full Committee.

Oral statements may be presented by members of the public with the concurrence of the Subcommittee Chairman; written statements will be accepted and made available to the Committee. Electronic recordings will be permitted only during those portions of the meeting that are open to the public, and questions may be asked only by members of the Subcommittee, its consultants, and staff. Persons desiring to make oral statements should notify the cognizant ACRS staff engineer named below five days prior to the meeting, if possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

During the initial portion of the meeting, the Subcommittee, along with any of its consultants who may be present, may exchange preliminary views regarding matters to be considered during the balance of the meeting.

The Subcommittee will then hear presentations by and hold discussions with representatives of the NRC staff, its consultants, and other interested persons regarding this review.

Further information regarding topics to be discussed, whether the meeting has been cancelled or rescheduled, the Chairman's ruling on requests for the opportunity to present oral statements and the time allotted therefor can be obtained by contacting the cognizant ACRS staff engineer, Mr. Michael T. Markley (telephone 301/415-6885) between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. (EDT). Persons planning to attend this meeting are urged to contact the above named individual one or two working days prior to the meeting to be advised of any potential changes to the agenda, etc., that may have occurred.

Dated: October 20, 1997.

Sam Duraiswamy,

Chief Nuclear Reactors Branch.

[FR Doc. 97-28265 Filed 10-23-97; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-155]

Consumers Energy Company, Big Rock Point Nuclear Plant; Notice of Public Meeting

The NRC will conduct a public meeting in the Charlevoix Township Hall (Stroud Hall), 12491 Waller Road, Charlevoix, Michigan, on November 13, 1997, to discuss Consumers Energy plans to immediately dismantle and decontaminate the Big Rock Point (BRP) nuclear plant, Charlevoix, Michigan. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. and be chaired by Mr. Philip Johnson, Chairman, Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners. This meeting will include a short presentation by the NRC staff on the decommissioning process, and a presentation by Consumers Energy on changes to their planned decommissioning activities. There will be an opportunity for members of the public to make comments and question the NRC staff and/or Consumers Energy representatives. This public meeting will be transcribed.

On September 19, 1997, Consumers Energy provided revision 1 to their Post-Shutdown Decommissioning Activities Report (PSDAR) to the NRC staff. This revision (NUDOCS microfiche accession number 9709240373) describes the licensee's plans to forego the 27-year long-term storage (SAFSTOR) decommissioning option (as described in BRP decommissioning Plan/PSDAR, NUDOCS microfiche accession number 9506210181) in lieu of plans to immediately dismantle and decontaminate (DECON) BRP. The previous public meetings, held on May 11, 1995, and March 4, 1997, discussed Consumer Energy plans to place the power plant in SAFSTOR following permanent plant shutdown and described, in brief, the possibility that they may elect DECON, if a low-level radioactive waste depository were available. However, the NRC staff believes that neither meeting provided specific information or opportunity for the public to ask questions or make comments on the Consumers Energy decision to immediately dismantle and decontaminate the BRP plant.

The BRP PSDAR is available for public inspection at the BRP local public document room (LPDR), located at the North Central Michigan College, 1515 Howard Street, Petosky, Michigan 49770, and at the Commission's Public Document Room located at the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, 20037.