ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS: People with environmental illness must reduce their exposure to volatile chemical substances in order to attend this meeting. In order to reduce such exposure, we ask that you not wear perfumes or scents at the meeting. We also ask that you smoke only in designated areas and the privacy of your room. Smoking is prohibited in the meeting room and surrounding area.

OPEN MEETING: This quarterly meeting of the National Council on Disability will be open to the public.

AGENDA: The proposed agenda includes:

Reports from the Chairperson and the Executive Director
Committee Meetings and Committee Reports
Executive Session (closed)
Unfinished Business
New Business
Announcements
Adjournment

Records will be kept of all National Council on Disability proceedings and will be available after the meeting for public inspection at the National Council on Disability.

Signed in Washington, DC, on July 6, 2000.

Ethel D. Briggs,

Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 00–17499 Filed 7–6–00; 2:12 pm]

BILLING CODE 6820–MA–M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 030–20563; ASLBP No. 00–779–01–CivP]

Western Soil, Inc.,Establishment of Atomic Safety and Licensing Board

Pursuant to delegation by the Commission dated December 29, 1972, published in the **Federal Register,** 37 FR 28,710 (1972), and §§ Sections 2.105, 2.700, 2.702, 2.714, 2.714a, 2.717, 2.721, and 2.772(j) of the Commission's Regulations, all as amended, an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board is being established to preside over the following proceeding: Western Soil, Inc., Order Imposing Civil Monetary Penalty.

This Board is being established pursuant to the request of Western Soil, Inc., for a hearing regarding an Order issued by the Director, Office of Enforcement, dated April 12, 2000, entitled ''Order Imposing Civil Monetary Penalty'' (65 FR 21,489 (Apr. 21, 2000)).

The Board is comprised of the following administrative judges:

Charles Bechhoefer, Chairman, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001
G. Paul Bollwerk, III, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001
Dr. Richard F. Cole, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001

All correspondence, documents and other materials shall be filed with the Judges in accordance with 10 CFR § 2.701.

Issued at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of July 2000.

G. Paul Bollwerk, III,

Chief Administrative Judge, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel.

[FR Doc. 00–17341 Filed 7–7–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50–170]

Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute; Nuclear Research Reactor; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering the issuance of a license amendment to Facility Operating License No. R–84, issued to Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (the licensee) for operation of their research reactor.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would allow extension of the license expiration time from November 8, 2000, to August 1, 2004, for the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute Research Reactor. The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for amendment dated February 28, 2000. The licensee submitted an Environmental Report with its request for license extension.

Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action is needed to allow continued operation of the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute Research Reactor in order to continue training, radiobiology research, and activation analysis activities beyond the current term of the license.

Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action

The Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute Research Reactor is located near the center of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland in a metal and concrete building.

The Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute Research Reactor is a moderate power (1 megawatt), pool-type research reactor. The NRC licensed the facility in 1962 and the facility license was renewed in 1984. Since about 1981, the facility has operated about 28.8 megawatt-hours per year on average. During that time, the gaseous Argon-41 radiological release has been on average of 3.236×10^9 becquerel per year (8.747 curies per year). Since 1981, the facility has had no radiological liquid releases. Solid releases of radioactive material have been transferred and disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the licensee's byproduct license. Currently, there are no plans to change any operating characteristics of the reactor during the license extension period.

The NRC concludes that the radiological effects of the continued operation will be minimal based on past radiological releases. The radiological exposures for facility operations have been within regulatory limits. Conditions are not expected to change.

As for potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not involve any historic sites. It does not affect non-radiological effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

In addition, the environmental impact associated with operation of research reactors has been generically evaluated by the staff and is discussed in the attached generic evaluation. This evaluation concludes that no significant environmental impact is associated with the operation of research reactors licensed to operate at power levels up to and including 2 megawatts thermal. We have determined that this generic evaluation is applicable to operation of the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute Research Reactor and that there are no special or unique features that would preclude reliance on the generic evaluation.

Accordingly, the NRC concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action. The proposed action will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released off site, 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.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

An alternative to the proposed action for the research reactor facility is to deny the application (*i.e.,* ''no action'' alternative). If the application is denied, the licensee has indicated that it would apply for license renewal and operate under the timely renewal provisions of 10 CFR 2.109 until the NRC renewed or denied the license renewal application. With operation under timely renewal or renewal, the actual conditions of the reactor would not change. If the NRC denied license renewal, Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute Research Reactor operations would stop and decommissioning would be required with a likely small impact on the environment. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternative action are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Environmental Assessment prepared for the renewal of Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute's license in January 1985.

Agencies and Persons Contacted

On May 8, 2000, the staff consulted with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Official, Rich McLean, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. Mr. McLean also contacted and coordinated review with Roland Fletcher, Manager Radiological Health Program, Air and Radiation Management Administration, Maryland Department of the Environment. The State officials had no comment.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the NRC concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the NRC 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 February 28, 2000. A hard copy is available for public inspection at the NRC's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC 20555. Publicly available records will also be accessible electronically from the ADAMS Public Library component on the NRC Web site, *http://www.nrc.gov* (the Electronic Reading Room).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 2nd day of June 2000.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ledyard B. Marsh,

Chief, Events Assessment, Generic Communications, and Non-Power Reactors Branch, Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

Environmental Considerations Regarding the Licensing of Research Reactors and Critical Facilities

Introduction

This discussion deals with research reactors and critical facilities which are designed to operate at low power levels, 2 MWt and lower, and are used primarily for basic research in neutron physics, neutron radiography, isotope production, experiments associated with nuclear engineering, training and as a part of a nuclear physics curriculum. Operation of such facilities will generally not exceed a 5-day week, 8-hour day, or about 2000 hours per year. Such reactors are located adjacent to technical service support facilities with convenient access for students and faculty.

Sited most frequently on the campuses of large universities, the reactors are usually housed in already existing structures, appropriately modified, or placed in new buildings that are designed and constructed to blend in with existing facilities. However, the environmental considerations discussed herein are not limited to those which are part of universities.

Facility

There are no exterior conduits, pipelines, electrical or mechanical structures or transmission lines attached to or adjacent to the facility other than for utility services, which are similar to those required in other similar facilities, specifically laboratories. Heat dissipation is generally accomplished by use of a cooling tower located on the roof of the building. These cooling towers typically are on the order of 10′ x 10′ x 10′ and are comparable to cooling towers associated with the air-conditioning systems of large office buildings.

Make-up for the cooling system is readily available and usually obtained from the local water supply. Radioactive gaseous effluents are limited to Ar-41 and the release of radioactive liquid effluents can be carefully monitored and controlled. Liquid wastes are collected in storage tanks to allow for decay and monitoring prior to dilution and release to the sanitary sewer system. Solid radioactive wastes are packaged and shipped offsite for storage at NRC-approved sites. The transportation of such waste is done in accordance with existing NRC–DOT regulations in approved shipping containers.

Chemical and sanitary waste systems are similar to those existing at other similar laboratories and buildings.

Environmental Effects of Site Preparation and Facility Construction

Construction of such facilities invariably occurs in areas that have already been disturbed by other building construction and, in some cases, solely within an already existing building. Therefore, construction would not be expected to have any significant effect on the terrain, vegetation, wildlife or nearby waters or aquatic life. The societal, economic and aesthetic impacts of construction would be no greater than those associated with the construction of a large office building or similar research facility.

Environmental Effects of Facility Operation

Release of thermal effluents from a reactor of less than 2 MWt will not have a significant effect on the environment. This small amount of waste heat is generally rejected to the atmosphere by means of small cooling towers. Extensive drift and/or fog will not occur at this low power level.

Release of routine gaseous effluents can be limited to Ar-41, which is generated by neutron activation of air. Even this will be kept as low as practicable by using gases other than air for supporting experiments. Yearly doses to un-restricted areas will be at or below established guidelines in 10 CFR Part 20 limits. Routine releases of radioactive liquid effluents can be carefully monitored and controlled in a manner that will ensure compliance with current standards. Solid radioactive wastes will be shipped to an authorized disposal site in approved containers. These wastes should not require more than a few shipping containers a year.

Based on experience with other research reactors, specifically TRIGA reactors operating in the 1 to 2 MWt range, the annual release of gaseous and liquid effluents to unrestricted areas should be less than 30 curies and 0.01 curies, respectively.

No release of potentially harmful chemical substances will occur during normal operation. Small amounts of chemicals and/or high-solid content water may be released from the facility through the sanitary sewer during periodic blowdown of the cooling tower or from laboratory experiments.

Other potential effects of the facility, such as aesthetics, noise, societal or

impact on local flora and fauna are expected to be too small to measure.

Environmental Effects of Accidents

Accidents ranging from the failure of experiments up to the largest core damage and fission product release considered possible result in doses that are less than 10 CFR Part 20 guidelines and are considered negligible with respect to the environment.

Unavoidable Effects of Facility Construction and Operation

The unavoidable effects of construction and operation involve the materials used in construction that cannot be recovered and the fissionable material used in the reactor. No adverse impact on the environment is expected from either of these unavoidable effects.

Alternatives to Construction and Operation of the Facility

To accomplish the objectives associated with research reactors, there are no suitable alternatives. Some of these objectives are training of students in the operation of reactors, production of radioisotopes, and use of neutron and gamma ray beams to conduct experiments.

Long-Term Effects of Facility Construction and Operation

The long-term effects of research facilities are considered to be beneficial as a result of the contribution to scientific knowledge and training. Because of the relatively small amount of capital resources involved and the small impact on the environment, very little irreversible and irretrievable commitment is associated with such facilities.

Costs and Benefits of Facility Alternatives

The costs are on the order of several millions of dollars with very little environmental impact. The benefits include, but are not limited to, some combination of the following: conduct of activation analyses, conduct of neutron radiography, training of operating personnel, and education of students. Some of these activities could be conducted using particle accelerators or radioactive sources which would be more costly and less efficient. There is no reasonable alternative to a nuclear research reactor for conducting this spectrum of activities.

Conclusion

The staff concludes that there will be no significant environmental impact associated with the licensing of research reactors or critical facilities designed to operate at power levels of 2 MWt or lower and that no environmental impact statements are required to be written for the issuance of construction permits or operating licenses for such facilities.

[FR Doc. 00–17344 Filed 7–7–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 70–27]

Consideration of License Amendment Request for BWX Technologies, Inc., and Opportunity for Hearing

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact and Opportunity to Request a Hearing on Amendment of Materials License SNM–42, BWX Technologies, Inc.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is considering the amendment of Special Nuclear Material License SNM–42 to exempt BWX Technologies, Inc. from the beryllium-to-fissile mass ratio limit specified in the fissile material exemption standards of 10 CFR 71.53.

Environmental Assessment

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has evaluated the environmental impacts of the exemption of BWX Technologies, Inc. (BWXT) from the beryllium-to-fissile mass ratio limits specified in the fissile material exemption standards of 10 CFR 71.53 . This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508) and NRC regulations (10 CFR part 51) which implement the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The purpose of this document is to assess the environmental consequences of the proposed license amendment.

The BWXT facility in Lynchburg, VA is authorized under SNM–42 to possess nuclear materials for the fabrication and assembly of nuclear fuel components. The facility supports the U.S. naval reactor program, fabricates research and university reactor components, and manufactures compact reactor fuel elements. The facility also performs recovery of scrap uranium. Research and development activities related to the fabrication of nuclear fuel components are also conducted.

1.2 Review Scope

In accordance with 10 CFR part 51, this EA (1) presents information and analysis for determining whether to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); (2) fulfills the NRC's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when no EIS is necessary; and (3) facilitates preparation of an EIS if one is necessary. Should the NRC issue a FONSI, no EIS would be prepared and the license amendment would be granted.

1.3 Proposed Action

The proposed action is to amend NRC Materials License SNM–42 to exempt the licensee from the beryllium-to-fissile mass ratio limit specified in the fissile material exemption standards of 10 CFR 71.53.

1.4 Need for Proposed Action

The proposed action would allow the licensee to transport uranium-beryllium waste with fission and activation products under the requirements of 10 CFR part 71. The licensee may use the fissile material exemption specified in 10 CFR 71.53 with an exemption to the 0.1 percent beryllium-to-fissile mass ratio limit.

The provisions of 10 CFR 71.53 exempt the shipment of material with limited fissile mass from the fissile material package standards in 10 CFR 71.55 and 71.59. The fissile material exemption in 10 CFR 71.53 is only valid for materials that contain a mass of beryllium that is less than 0.1 percent of the mass of fissile material. BWXT has identified waste material with a limited amount of fissile material, but with beryllium quantities that exceed the 0.1 percent beryllium-to-fissile mass ratio limit. BWXT needs to ship these wastes, which consist of large physical objects (*e.g.,* ductwork). BWXT does not want to ship the waste in transportation packages that are approved by the NRC because the waste materials would require significant cutting and processing that would increase the risk of beryllium exposure to personnel. The uranium and beryllium content of the waste objects is in the form of surface contamination. Both uranium and beryllium contamination levels are expected to be relatively low. The NRC staff has determined that the shipments by BWXT would be nuclearly safe with certain license conditions applied; however, given there is no uranium level below which the 0.1 percent beryllium to uranium ratio does not