

November 28, 2005

Mr. James Randall Walti
Vice President and General Counsel
General Atomics
P.O. Box 85608
San Diego, CA 92186-9784

SUBJECT: GENERAL ATOMICS AMENDMENT 84, REQUEST TO RELEASE A PORTION
OF GENERAL ATOMICS' FACILITY TO UNRESTRICTED USE: "FORMER
BUILDING 25 SITE" (TAC L31905)

Dear Mr. Walti:

In accordance with your letter dated April 4, 2005, and pursuant to Part 70 to Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Materials License SNM-696 is hereby amended to reflect the release of the "Former Building 25 Site." Safety Condition S-1 has been revised to include the date of April 4, 2005. All other conditions of this license shall remain the same.

This action closes TAC L31905.

Enclosed are copies of the revised Materials License SNM-696 (Enclosure 1, non-public version), (Enclosure 2, public version), and the Safety Evaluation Report (SER), which includes the Environmental Review (Enclosure 3).

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Merritt N. Baker of my staff at (301) 415-6155 or via e-mail to mnbnrc@nrc.gov.

The enclosed (non-public version) license contains commercial information as defined in 10 CFR 2.390(d), therefore, will not be placed in the Public Document room nor the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of the NRC's document system (ADAMS).

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter, the public version of the license, and the SER will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Gary S. Janosko, Chief
Fuel Cycle Facilities Branch
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety
and Safeguards
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No.: 70-734
License No.: SNM-696
Amendment 84

Enclosures:

1. Materials License SNM-696 (non-public)
2. Materials License SNM-696 (public)
3. Safety Evaluation Report

cc: Mr. John Fassell
State of California
Department of Health Services
Radiologic Health Branch Mail Stop 178
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 92234-7320

Dr. Ron Rogus
State of California
Department of Health Services
Radiologic Health Branch Mail Stop 178
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 92234-7320

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Closes TAC L31905DISTRIBUTION:

FCFB r/f M.Adams, FCSS K.Banovak, DWMEP
B.Spitzberg, RIV M.Bartlett, FCSS

ML052920430

OFC	FCFB	FCFB	FCFB	FCFB
NAME	M.Baker	V.Cheney	J.Lubinski	G.Janosko
DATE	10/19/05	11/21/05	11/21/05	11/28/05

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

DOCKET: 70-734

LICENSEE: General Atomics
San Diego, CA

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO RELEASE A PORTION OF THE GENERAL ATOMICS'
FACILITY TO UNRESTRICTED USE: FORMER BUILDING 25 SITE LAND
AREA (TAC L31905)

BACKGROUND

By letter dated July 10, 2003 (ML031970643), General Atomics (GA) requested that the "Former Building 25 Site" be released to unrestricted use, and submitted the Final Radiological Survey Report, dated July 2003. However, in August 2004, GA withdrew the request. Confirmation of withdrawal was provided in a letter from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), dated August 12, 2004 (ML0422605074). Subsequently, by letter dated April 4, 2005 (ML052590024), GA requested that the NRC be the lead for release of the Nuclear Waste Processing Facility and Surrounding Areas, including the "Former Building 25 Site." By letter dated July 19, 2005 (ML052000482), the NRC agreed to be the lead agency, and confirmed that the site surveys for release would be evaluated.

DISCUSSION

GA has continued to decontaminate and decommission its nuclear facilities and land areas in order to release them for unrestricted use, and completely dismantled the "Former Building 25 Site," which housed a radioactive waste treatment facility, and disposed of the material as Low Level Radioactive Waste (LLW). The Former Building 25 Site consisted of the land previously occupied by the building (its footprint) and a narrow strip of land adjacent to each of the four sides of the former building footprint.

The sewer line between Building 25 and the nearest manhole (S-15) was disposed of as LLW during decommissioning of the main sewer system in 2002. Release of the S-15 to S-13 to S-18 Sewer Trench was documented by Amendment 74 to NRC license SNM-696.

In early 2003, final surveys and soil samples were obtained to verify that the areas met the approved release criteria in the Site Decommissioning Plan, dated October 11, 1996. Confirmatory surveys were performed by the NRC inspectors on March 29-30, 2004, and were documented in Inspection Report 070-00734/04-001 (ML041560554). The results of all surveys were less than the criteria in the Site Decommissioning Plan for unrestricted release, and were consistent with the results obtained by the licensee.

Soil samples were collected at biased locations from the "Former Building 25 Site" and analyzed by both the licensee's and NRC's laboratories for confirmatory analysis and comparison of results. The results of a statistical comparison of soil sample analytical results performed by the NRC were consistent with the measurements taken by the licensee.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for amendment of License SNM-696 to incorporate the Site Decommissioning Plan. The EA concluded that amendment of the license would have no significant impact on the environment, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was published in the Federal Register on April 27, 1998 (63 FR 20671).

The changes proposed in the request to release the former Building 25 site do not affect the scope or nature of the licensed activity. 10 CFR 51.22(c)(11) allows for a categorical exclusion if the following requirements have been satisfied:

- There is no significant change in the types or significant increase in the amounts of any effluents that may be released offsite.
- There is no significant increase in the individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure.
- There is no significant construction impact.
- There is no significant increase in the potential for or no consequences from radiological accidents.

There are no longer nuclear fuel manufacturing activities being conducted at GA, nor does GA still have such capabilities. GA's special nuclear material license issued by the NRC has been amended to authorize possession only. No fuel processing activities are authorized. Since there are no longer any radioactive liquid releases from this facility, there will be no significant increase in the possibility of an offsite release and there will be no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Consequently, there is no significant increase in the potential for, or no consequences from radiological accidents. Release of the "Former Building 25 Site" involves no construction activity. Therefore, there will be no construction impact.

The staff has determined that the proposed change does not adversely impact the public health and safety or the environment, and is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare a site-specific EA. Therefore, in accordance with 10 CFR 51.22(c)(11), neither an EA nor an Environmental Impact statement is warranted for this action.

CONCLUSION

The NRC staff determined that the "Former Building 25 Site" was surveyed and decommissioned in accordance with the approved Decommissioning Plan. Confirmatory surveys were performed by the NRC inspectors and the results meet the approved NRC release criteria. Therefore, the staff recommends approval of the amendment.

Region IV and the Division of Waste Management concur with this recommendation.

PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTOR

Merritt N. Baker