

PUBLIC NOTICE

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO AMEND OPERATING LICENSE AT THE
COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has received an application dated April 15, 2020, (available at Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML20107G017), from Energy Northwest (the licensee), for an exigent amendment to the operating license for the Columbia Generating Station (Columbia), located in Richland, Washington.

The license amendment request would extend the implementation period for License Amendment number (no.) 255 Control Room Air Conditioning System that was issued on February 6, 2020 (available at ADAMS, Accession No ML19337C368), from May 6, 2020, to February 6, 2021.

The licensee requested that the license amendment be processed on an exigent basis, in accordance with the provisions in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) Section 50.91(a)(6). Under 10 CFR 50.91(a)(6)(i)(B), where the Commission finds that exigent circumstances exist, in that a licensee and the Commission must act quickly and that time does not permit the Commission to publish a *Federal Register* notice allowing 30 days for prior public comment, and it also determines that the amendment involves no significant hazards considerations, the Commission will use local media to provide reasonable notice to the public in the area surrounding a licensee's facility of the licensee's amendment and of its proposed determination that no significant hazards consideration is involved, consulting with the licensee on the proposed media release and on the geographical area of its coverage.

The licensee's claim of exigent circumstances is based on the considerations that a state of emergency was declared by the State of Washington on February 29, 2020, and that a national emergency was declared on March 13, 2020, by the Federal Government due to a

pandemic related to COVID-19. Additionally, a “Stay Home – Stay Healthy” proclamation was made by the State of Washington on March 23, 2020, which prohibits activities to only those associated with essential services. In order to support those governmental actions the licensee for Columbia only has employees designated as essential, physically reporting to the site and the only work being performed are those activities that must be done to continue the safe operation of the plant while maintaining a focus on the health and safety of the plant employees. The implementation of license amendment no. 255 would require individuals who are currently considered non-essential to be onsite which would violate the mandates above.

Additionally, operation of the plant, while the implementation of license amendment no. 255 is extended, will have no impact on nuclear safety since the existing alignment of the Control Room Air Condition System, prior to Amendment 255, is adequate to perform its design function, and the subsequent implementation of that amendment will then add an additional layer of safety in the event of a design basis event. Further, after the Amendment 255 implementation, the change will provide maximum flexibility with regard to allowable control room air conditioning system cooling sources and, as described below, not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequence of an accident previously evaluated.

The licensee and the NRC staff have evaluated this proposed change with regard to the determination of whether or not a significant hazards consideration is involved. Operation of Columbia, in accordance with the proposed amendments will not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The proposed amendment to implement a schedule extension is administrative in nature and does not require any physical plant modifications, physically affect any plant systems or components, or entail changes in plant operation. The amendment implementation schedule extension does not increase the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated in the Final Safety Analysis Report. The change in the implementation schedule of the Control Room Air Condition System License Amendment Request (LAR) will have no impact

on the initiation or the consequences of any accidents previously evaluated. Technical Specification requirements that govern operability or routine testing of plant instruments are not assumed to be initiators of any analyzed event. The change in implementation schedule will not increase the consequences of an accident since the existing plant configuration is in accordance with the plant's design and licensing bases. All acceptance criteria continue to be met. Given the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic precautions in place in Washington State, delay of implementation is the no risk option. Therefore, there is no significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

There are no postulated hazards, new or different, contained in this amendment. The proposed amendment to the implementation schedule extension is administrative in nature and does not require any physical plant modifications, physically affect any plant systems or components, or entail changes in plant operation. Given the COVID-19 pandemic precautions in place in Washington State, delay of implementation is the no risk option. Therefore, the proposed change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

The proposed amendment to the implementation schedule extension is administrative in nature and does not require any physical plant modifications, physically affect any plant systems or components, or entail changes in plant operation. The existing plant configuration maintains the required redundancy, diversity and capability to ensure plant design and licensing basis are met. Given the COVID-19 pandemic precautions in place in Washington State, delay of implementation is the no risk option. Therefore, the proposed change does not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

Following an initial review of this application, the requested amendments have been evaluated against the standards in 10 CFR 50.92 and the NRC staff has made a proposed (preliminary) determination that the requested amendments involve no significant hazards considerations. The changes do not significantly increase the probability or consequences of

any accident previously considered, nor create the possibility of an accident of a different kind, nor significantly decrease any margin of safety.

If the proposed determination that the requested license amendment involves no significant hazards consideration becomes final, the staff will issue the amendments without first offering an opportunity for a public hearing. An opportunity for a hearing will be published in the *Federal Register* at a later date and any hearing request will not delay the effective date of the amendment.

If the staff decides in its final determination that the amendment does involve a significant hazards consideration, a notice of opportunity for a prior hearing will be published in the *Federal Register* and, if a hearing is granted, it will be held before the amendment is issued.

Comments on the proposed determination of no significant hazards consideration may be (1) telephoned to Jennifer Dixon-Herrity, Chief, Plant Licensing Branch LPL4, by collect call to 301-415- 2967, or (2) e-mailed to Jennifer.Dixon-Herrity@nrc.gov, or (3) submitted in writing to Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWFN-7-A60M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Program Management, Announcements and Editing Staff. All comments received by close of business on May 1, 2020 from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays will be considered in reaching a final determination. A copy of the application may be examined electronically through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) in the NRC Library at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> and, dependent upon COVID-19 access restrictions, at the Commission's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209, or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr.resource@nrc.gov.