

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONCONSUMERS POWER COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-155ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OFNO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering the issuance of an exemption from the requirements of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50 to Consumers Power Company (CPCo) (the licensee) for the Big Rock Point Plant, located at the licensee's site in Charlevoix County, Michigan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of the Proposed Action: The exemption would exempt the licensee from the Appendix J requirement of testing the reactor containment building airlock door seals within 72 hours of each opening. The proposed exemption is in accordance with the licensee's request dated September 15, 1975, as supplemented on October 10, 1980 and as supported by additional commitments made on February 2, 1984.

The Need for the Proposed Action: 10 CFR 50.54(o) requires that all licensees meet the requirements of Appendix J - Primary Reactor Containment Leakage Testing for Water-Cooled Power Reactors. Section III.D.2(b)(iii) of Appendix J requires that airlocks opened during periods when containment integrity is required shall be tested for leakage within 3 days after each opening, or shall be tested every 3 days during periods of frequent openings. Section III.D.2(b)(i) of Appendix J requires that full pressure airlock leak tests be done every 6 months. In lieu of these requirements, the licensee has proposed to (1) perform full pressure leakage tests of airlock every 6 months, and (2) replace airlock door seals periodically in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

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Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action: The proposed exemption pertains to the frequency of testing the containment airlocks. The NPC staff evaluated containment airlock leak testing during the Integrated Assessment portion of the Systematic Evaluation Program. The staff conclusion, documented in Section 4.20 of NUREG-0828, was that the licensee's proposed leakage testing program including more frequent full pressure testing, and periodic replacement of airlock door seals in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations would provide an acceptable alternative to strict compliance with the applicable Appendix J requirements. This conclusion is further supported by the past good performance of the airlock door seals at the Big Rock Point facility. The alternative actions proposed by the licensee would provide reasonable assurance that airlock leakage will not exceed acceptable levels. Thus, the exemption does not affect the risk of facility accidents. Post-accident radiological releases will not be greater than previously determined nor does the proposed exemption otherwise affect radiological plant effluents, or any significant occupational exposures. The exemption does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological or nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed exemption. Since we have concluded that there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed exemption, any alternative such as literal compliance with Section III.D.2(b)(iii) will either have no environmental impact or greater environmental impact. The principal alternative to the exemption would be to require literal compliance with Section III.D.2(b)(iii) of Appendix J to 10 CFR Part 50. This would require Big Rock Point to leak-test the containment airlocks every 3 days. Such testing would not enhance the protection of the environment.

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Alternative Use of Resources: The proposed exemption involves no use of resources not previously considered.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's request as discussed above. The NRC staff did not consult any other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

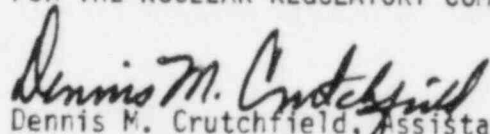
The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed exemption.

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, we conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the request for exemption dated September 15, 1975 and supplemental submittals dated October 10, 1980 and February 2, 1984, which are available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 1717 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., and at North Central Michigan College, 1515 Harvard Street, Petoskey, Michigan 48770.

Dated at Bethesda, Maryland this 29th day of October 1985.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

  
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for Safety Assessment  
Division of Licensing  
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