

hand image. The unique characteristics of the hand image would be compared with the previously stored template to verify authorization for entry. Individuals, including licensee employees and contractors, would be allowed to keep their badges when departing the site.

Based on the Sandia report, "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91-0276•UC-906, Unlimited Release, June 1991, that concluded hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance and high detection characteristics, and on its own experience with the current photo-identification system, the licensee determined that the proposed hand geometry system would provide the same level of assurance as the current system that access is only granted to authorized individuals. Since both the badge and hand geometry would be necessary for access into the protected areas, the proposed system would provide a positive verification process. Potential loss of a badge by an individual, as a result of taking the badge offsite, would not enable unauthorized entry into protected areas. The licensee has stated it will implement a process for periodically testing the proposed system to ensure continued overall level of performance equivalent to that specified in the regulation. The Physical Security Plan will be revised to include implementation and testing of the hand geometry access control system and to allow licensee employees and contractors to take their badges offsite.

The licensee has determined that the proposed hand geometry access control process for identifying personnel will provide the same high assurance objective regarding onsite physical protection as provided by the photo-identification process now in use.

The access process will continue to be under the observation of security personnel. A numbered picture badge identification system will continue to be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected areas.

Accordingly, the Commission concludes that this proposed action would result in no significant radiological environmental impacts. With regard to potential non-radiological impacts, the proposed action does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological

environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

As an alternative to the proposed action, the staff considered denial of the proposed action. Denial of the application 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 did not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement related to operation of the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2, dated March 1985.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy on June 13, 1995, the staff consulted with the Georgia State official, Mr. James Setser of the Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

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, the Commission has concluded 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 February 14, 1995, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC at the local public document room located at the Burke County Public Library, 412 Fourth Street, Waynesboro, Georgia.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 6th day of July 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Herbert N. Berkow,

Director, Project Directorate II-2, Division of Reactor Projects—I/II, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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[Docket No. 50-397]

Washington Public Power Supply System; WPPSS Nuclear Project No. 2 Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations to Facility Operating License No. NPF-21, issued to Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS, or the licensee) for operation of the WPPSS Nuclear Project No. 2, located in Benton County, Washington.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The exemption would allow implementation of a hand geometry biometric system of site access control so that photograph identification badges can be taken offsite by personnel badged at the site but not employed by the Supply System.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application, dated March 1, 1995, for exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for physical protection of licensed activities in nuclear power reactors against radiological sabotage."

The Need for the Proposed Action

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55(a), the licensee is required to establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization. Section 73.55(d)(1) of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, "Access Requirements," specifies that "the licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." Section 73.55(d)(5) further specifies that "a numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." This paragraph also states that an individual not employed by the licensee, but who requires frequent and extended access to protected and vital areas, may be authorized access to such areas without escort provided that he receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area."

Currently, unescorted access into protected areas of the WNP-2 site is controlled through use of a photograph on a badge with a keycard attached (hereafter, these are referred to as the badge). The security officers at the entrance station use the photograph on the badge to visually identify the individual requesting access. The