[Docket No. 50–244]

R. E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant; Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment to Facility Operating License, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, and Opportunity for a Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR–18, issued to Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation (the licensee) for operation of the R. E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant located in Wayne County, New York.

The proposed amendment would revise the Ginna Station Technical Specifications (TSs) to implement the amended regulation 10 CFR Part 50; Appendix J, Option B (new rule), to provide a performance based option for leakage-rate testing of containment.

The proposed amendment would revise the current TSs (CTSs) and License, Item 2.D, which contains four exemptions to 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Option A, which are proposed to be removed:

a. Exemption from Section III.A.4(a) with respect to the maximum allowable leakage rate for reduced pressure tests;

b. Exemption from Section III.B.1 with respect to the acceptable technique for performing local Type B leakage rate tests;

c. Exemption from Section III.D.1 for scheduling of containment integrated leakage rate tests with respect to the 10-year inservice inspection (ISI); and

d. Exemption from Section III.D.2 with respect to the testing interval of containment airlocks.

The proposed amendment would implement Option B as part of the implementation of the improved standard TSs (ISTSs) which are currently undergoing NRC staff review (submittal of May 26, 1995).

The amendment proposes to add a specific reference to Regulatory Guide 1.163, ''Performance-Based Containment Leak-Test Program'' in the Administrative Controls section of the Ginna Station TSs. No exceptions to the regulatory guide, nor the documents which are endorsed by the regulatory guide, are being requested. The licensee does not propose to deviate from methods approved by the Commission and endorsed in a regulatory guide.

The amendment proposes that a detailed performance-based leakage-test program will be available for NRC inspection upon implementation of the ISTSs for the Ginna Station.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

The proposed changes to the Ginna Station Technical Specifications [* * *] have been evaluated with respect to 10 CFR 50.92(c) and shown to not involve a significant hazards consideration as described below. This evaluation is organized into the 4 categories [* * *].

C.1 Evaluation of More Restrictive Changes

The more restrictive changes [* * *] do not involve a significant hazards consideration as discussed below:

1. Operation of Ginna Station in accordance with the proposed changes does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated. The proposed changes provide more stringent requirements for operation of the facility. These more stringent requirements do not result in operation that will increase the probability of initiating an analyzed event and do not alter assumptions relative to mitigation of an accident or transient event. The more restrictive requirements continue to ensure that process variables, structures, systems, and components are maintained consistent with the safety analyses and licensing basis. Therefore, this change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously analyzed.

2. Operation of Ginna Station in accordance with the proposed changes does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated. The proposed changes do not involve a physical alteration of the plant (i.e., no new or different type of equipment will be installed) or changes in the methods governing normal plant operation. The proposed changes do impose different requirements. However, these changes are consistent with assumptions made in the safety analysis and licensing basis. Thus, this change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

3. Operation of Ginna Station in accordance with the proposed changes does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The imposition of more restrictive requirements either has no impact or increases the margin of plant safety. Each change in this category is, by definition, providing additional restrictions to enhance plant safety. The change maintains requirements within safety analyses and licensing bases. Therefore, this change does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

Based upon the above information, it has been determined that the proposed administrative changes to the Ginna Station Technical Specifications do not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated, does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident previously evaluated, and does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed changes meet the requirements of 10 CFR 50.92(c) and do not involve a significant hazards consideration.

C.2 Evaluation of Less Restrictive Changes

The less restrictive changes [* * *] do not involve a significant hazards consideration as discussed below:

1. Operation of Ginna Station in accordance with the proposed changes does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated. The proposed changes are all consistent with NRC requirements and guidance for implementation of Option B. Based on industry and NRC evaluations performed in support of developing Option B, these changes potentially result in a minor increase in the consequences of an accident previously evaluated due to the increased testing intervals. However, the proposed changes do not result in an increase in the core damage frequency since the containment system is used for mitigation purposes only. The changes are also expected to result in increased attention on components with poor leakage test history as part of the performance-based nature of Option B such that the marginally increased consequences from the expanded testing intervals may be further reduced or negated. Therefore, these changes do not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. Operation of Ginna Station in accordance with the proposed changes does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated. The proposed changes do not involve a physical alteration of the plant (i.e., no new or different type of equipment will be installed) nor alter the function of the containment system. The changes only provide for additional time between tests and revised acceptance and testing criteria for leakage tests which remain consistent with the accident analysis bases. Thus, these changes do not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously evaluated.

3. Operation of Ginna Station in accordance with the proposed changes does not involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. The proposed changes do