

proposed changes will not significantly reduce any margin of safety that currently exists.

Based upon the above, NMC has determined that the proposed amendment will not involve a significant hazards consideration.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based upon this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

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PSEG Nuclear LLC, Docket No. 50-354, Hope Creek Generating Station, Salem County, New Jersey

Date of amendment request: March 13, 2003.

Description of amendment request: The proposed amendment deletes requirements from the Technical Specifications (TSs) and other elements of the licensing bases to maintain a Post Accident Sampling System (PASS). Licensees were generally required to implement PASS upgrades as described in NUREG-0737, "Clarification of TMI [Three Mile Island] Action Plan Requirements," and Regulatory Guide 1.97, "Instrumentation for Light-Water-Cooled Nuclear Power Plants to Assess Plant and Environs Conditions During and Following an Accident."

Implementation of these upgrades was an outcome of the lessons learned from the accident that occurred at TMI, Unit 2. Requirements related to PASS were imposed by Order for many facilities and were added to, or included in, the TSs for nuclear power reactors currently licensed to operate. Lessons learned and improvements implemented over the last 20 years have shown that the information obtained from PASS can be readily obtained through other means, or is of little use in the assessment and mitigation of accident conditions.

The changes are based on NRC-approved Technical Specification Task Force (TSTF) Standard Technical Specification Change Traveler, TSTF-413, "Elimination of Requirements for a Post Accident Sampling System (PASS)." The NRC staff issued a notice of opportunity for comment in the **Federal Register** on December 27, 2001 (66 FR 66949), on possible amendments concerning TSTF-413, including a model Safety Evaluation and model no significant hazards consideration (NSHC) determination, using the consolidated line item improvement

process. The NRC staff subsequently issued a notice of availability of the models for referencing in license amendment applications in the **Federal Register** on March 20, 2002 (67 FR 13027). The licensee affirmed the applicability of the following NSHC determination in its application dated March 13, 2003.

Basis for proposed no significant hazards consideration determination: As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), an analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration is presented below:

1. The proposed change does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

The PASS was originally designed to perform many sampling and analysis functions. These functions were designed and intended to be used in post-accident situations and were put into place as a result of the TMI-2 accident. The specific intent of the PASS was to provide a system that has the capability to obtain and analyze samples of plant fluids containing potentially high levels of radioactivity, without exceeding plant personnel radiation exposure limits. Analytical results of these samples would be used largely for verification purposes in aiding the plant staff in assessing the extent of core damage and subsequent offsite radiological dose projections. The system was not intended to, and does not, serve a function for preventing accidents and its elimination would not affect the probability of accidents previously evaluated.

In the 20 years since the TMI-2 accident, and the consequential promulgation of post-accident sampling requirements, operating experience has demonstrated that a PASS provides little actual benefit to post-accident mitigation. Past experience has indicated that there exists in-plant instrumentation and methodologies available in lieu of a PASS for collecting and assimilating information needed to assess core damage following an accident. Furthermore, the implementation of Severe Accident Management Guidance (SAMG) emphasizes accident management strategies based on in-plant instruments. These strategies provide guidance to the plant staff for mitigation and recovery from a severe accident. Based on current severe accident management strategies and guidelines, it is determined that the PASS provides little benefit to the plant staff in coping with an accident.

The regulatory requirements for the PASS can be eliminated without degrading the plant emergency

response. The emergency response, in this sense, refers to the methodologies used in ascertaining the condition of the reactor core, mitigating the consequences of an accident, assessing and projecting offsite releases of radioactivity, and establishing protective action recommendations to be communicated to offsite authorities. The elimination of the PASS will not prevent an accident management strategy that meets the initial intent of the post-TMI-2 accident guidance through the use of the SAMGs, the emergency plan (EP), the emergency operating procedures (EOP), and site survey monitoring that support modification of emergency plan protective action recommendations (PARs).

Therefore, the elimination of the PASS requirements from TSs (and other elements of the licensing bases) does not involve a significant increase in the consequences of any accident previously evaluated.

2. The proposed change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously evaluated.

The elimination of PASS-related requirements will not result in any failure mode not previously analyzed. The PASS was intended to allow for verification of the extent of reactor core damage, and also to provide an input to offsite dose projection calculations. The PASS is not considered an accident precursor, nor does its existence or elimination have any adverse impact on the pre-accident state of the reactor core or post-accident confinement of radioisotopes within the containment building.

Therefore, this change does not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any previously evaluated.

3. The proposed change does not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

The elimination of the PASS, in light of existing plant equipment, instrumentation, procedures, and programs that provide effective mitigation of, and recovery from, reactor accidents, results in a neutral impact to the margin of safety. Methodologies that are not reliant on PASS are designed to provide rapid assessment of current reactor core conditions and the direction of degradation while effectively responding to the event in order to mitigate the consequences of the accident. The use of a PASS is redundant and does not provide quick recognition of core events or rapid response to events in progress. The intent of the requirements established as