

Company (the licensee), for operation of the H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit No. 2 (HBRSEP2), located in Darlington County, South Carolina.

The proposed amendment would revise the applicable Technical specifications (TS) requirements for rod position monitoring during the current operating cycle (Cycle 22) to allow the use of an alternate method of determining rod position. This will be effective until repair of the indication system can be completed during the next shutdown of sufficient duration.

The reason for the exigency is due to the unanticipated failure of the HBRSEP2 analog rod position indicator for Control Rod H-10 in Shutdown Bank B that was declared inoperable on December 22, 2002. Additionally, there is a concern regarding excessive system wear and potential increase for a malfunction or failure.

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.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 50.91(a)(6) for amendments to be granted under exigent circumstances, the NRC staff must determine 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:

An evaluation of the proposed change has been performed in accordance with 10 CFR 50.91(a)(1) regarding no significant hazards considerations, using the standards in 10 CFR 50.92(c). A discussion of these standards as they relate to this amendment request follows:

1. The Proposed Change Does Not Involve a Significant Increase in the Probability or Consequences of an Accident Previously Evaluated.

The proposed change provides an alternative method for verifying the position of one control rod in a shutdown bank of rods. The proposed change meets the intent of the current TS by ensuring verification of the position of this rod once every eight hours. The proposed change only provides an

alternative method of monitoring rod position and does not change the assumptions or results of any previously evaluated accident.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. The Proposed Change Does Not Create the Possibility of a New or Different Kind of Accident From Any Previously Evaluated.

As described above, the proposed change only provides an alternative method of determining the position of one control rod in a shutdown bank of rods. No new accident initiators are introduced by the proposed alternative method of performing rod position verification. The proposed change does not affect the reactor protection system or the reactor control system. Hence, no new failure modes are created that would cause a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would 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 Bases of TS 3.1.7 states that the operability of the rod position indicators is required to determine control rod positions and thereby ensure compliance with the control rod alignment and insertion limits. The proposed change does not alter the requirement to determine rod position, but provides an alternative method for determining the position of the affected rod. As a result, the initial conditions of the accident analyses are preserved, and the consequences of previously analyzed accidents are unaffected.

Therefore, operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on 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.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received within 14 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 14-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period, such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license

amendment before the expiration of the 14-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this **Federal Register** notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D59, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Documents may be examined, and/or copied for a fee, at the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By February 24, 2003, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714,¹ which is available at the Commission's PDR, located at One White Flint North, Public File Area O1 F21, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, and available electronically on the Internet at the NRC Web site <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/cfr/>. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the

¹ The most recent version of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, published January 1, 2002, inadvertently omitted the last sentence of 10 CFR 2.714(d) and subparagraphs (d)(1) and (2), regarding petitions to intervene and contentions. For the complete, corrected text of 10 CFR 2.714(d), please see 67 FR 20884 (April 20, 2002).