

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the NRC concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the NRC has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated December 10, 2002. 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 (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records will be accessible electronically from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of July 2003.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

L. Raghavan,

*Chief, Section 1, Project Directorate III,
Division of Licensing Project Management,
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 70-143]

Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc.; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

I. Introduction

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has received a license amendment request from Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc. (NFS) dated January 23, 2003, to amend Special Nuclear Material License SNM-124 to use International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP) Publication 68 for Derived Air Concentration (DAC) and the Annual Limit on Intake (ALI) determinations (Ref. 1, 2). An Environmental Assessment (EA) was performed by the NRC staff in support of its review of NFS' license amendment request, in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR part 51. The conclusion of the EA is a Finding of No

Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed licensing action.

II. Supplementary Information

Background

The NFS facility in Erwin, TN is authorized under SNM-124 to possess nuclear materials for the fabrication and assembly of nuclear fuel components. The facility fabricates research and university reactor components and manufactures compact reactor fuel elements. The facility also performs recovery of scrap uranium.

Inhalation of dust in radiologically controlled areas poses an internal radiation hazard, and the NRC regulations in 10 CFR part 20 require licensees to implement certain protective measures to minimize that hazard. These measures include taking a variety of air samples, using respirators in certain work areas, posting airborne radioactivity warning signs outside the work areas, and putting the potentially exposed workers on a routine bioassay program to assess their intakes and verify the effectiveness of the protection program. Many of these protective measures are triggered when the air concentrations in the workplace reach specified fractions of the air concentrations tabulated in 10 CFR part 20 appendix B. NFS has requested to amend its license to permit the use of values other than those tabulated in Part 20 as the basis for triggering protective measures, and for assessing the internal dose to its workers. The basis for the amendment request is the recommendations in ICRP 68. In the amendment application, NFS maintains that the assessment of the radiological hazard based on 10 CFR part 20 Appendix B requires it to implement monitoring and protection programs at levels that are out of proportion with the true level of hazard, and that do not significantly add to worker protection. NFS believes that granting the exemption would enable it to reduce the size of its internal exposure program while, at the same time, provide a level of protection proportional to the actual hazard. NFS references an NRC Staff Requirements Memorandum (SECY-99-077) which directs the staff to grant exemptions to 10 CFR part 20 on this modeling issue on a case-by-case basis.

Review Scope

In accordance with 10 CFR part 51, this EA serves to (1) present information and analysis for determining whether to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); (2) fulfill the

NRC's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act when no EIS is necessary; and (3) facilitate preparation of an EIS when one is necessary. Should the NRC issue a FONSI, no EIS would be prepared and the license amendment would be granted.

This document serves to evaluate and document the impacts of the proposed action. Other activities on the site have previously been evaluated and documented in the 1999 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Renewal of the NRC license for NFS (Ref. 3). The 1999 document is referenced when no significant changes have occurred. Besides the proposed licensing action, operations will continue to remain limited to those authorized by the license.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to amend NRC Materials License SNM-124 to authorize the use of Derived Air Concentration (DAC) and the Annual Limit on Intake (ALI) values specified in International Commission on Radiation Protection Publication 68 (ICRP 68), entitled Dose Coefficients for Intake of Radionuclides by Worker (Ref. 2). The DAC/ALI values would be used to assign the effective dose to workers based on an aerosol particle size of 5 microns as specified in ICRP 68. The proposed DAC/ALI values are based on particle size studies, as currently described in Sections 3.2.5.1 and 12.13.5 of Materials License SNM-124 (Ref. 4).

Affected Environment

The affected environment for the proposed activity is the NFS site. A full description of the site and its characteristics is given in the 1999 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Renewal of the NRC license for NFS (Ref. 3).

Effluent Releases and Monitoring

A full description of the effluent monitoring program at the site is provided in the 1999 Environmental Assessment for the Renewal of the NRC license for NFS (Ref. 3). Monitoring programs at the NFS facility comprise effluent monitoring of air and water and environmental monitoring of various media (air, soil, vegetation, and groundwater). This program provides a basis for evaluation of public health and safety impacts, for establishing compliance with environmental regulations, and for development of mitigation measures if necessary. The monitoring program is not expected to change as a result of the proposed action. The NRC has reviewed the