For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Brenda Jo. Shelton,

NRC Clearance Officer, Office of Information Services.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–348 and 50–364]

Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc (SNC), Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Power Plant, Units 1 and 2; Notice of Availability of the Final Supplement 18 to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the License Renewal of Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Power Plant, Units 1 and 2

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has published a final plant-specific supplement to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), NUREG–1437, regarding the renewal of operating licenses NPF–2 and NPF–8 for an additional 20 years of operation at Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Power Plant (FNP). FNP is located in Houston County, Alabama, approximately 16.5 miles east of the City of Dothan, Alabama. Possible alternatives to the proposed action (license renewal) include no action and reasonable alternative energy sources.

Section 9.3 of the final supplement 18 states:

> Based on: (1) The analysis and findings in the GEIS (NRC 1996; 1999), (2) the environmental report submitted by SNC (SNC 2003), (3) consultation with Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies, (4) the staff's own independent review, and (5) the staff's consideration of public comments, the recommendation of the staff is that the Commission determine that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Farley Units 1 and 2, are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy planning decision makers would be unreasonable.

The final Supplement 18 to the GEIS is available for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR) located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, 20852, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC's Web site at *http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html* (the Public Electronic Reading Room). Persons who do not have access to ADAMS, or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, should contact the PDR reference staff at 1–800–397–4209, 301–415–4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov. In addition, the Houston Love Memorial Library, 212 West Burdeshaw Street, Dothan, Alabama, and the Lucy Maddox Memorial Library, 11880 Columbia Street, Blakely, Georgia, have agreed to make the final plant-specific supplement to the GEIS available for public inspection.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jack Cushing, License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program, Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. Mr. Cushing may be contacted at 301–415–1424 or via e-mail at *JXC9@nrc.gov.*

Dated in Rockville, Maryland, this 9th day of March, 2005.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Pao-Tsin Kuo,

Program Director, License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program, Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50–424 and 50–425]

Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of an exemption from Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR) part 50, Appendix G, for Renewed Facility Operating License Nos. NPF–68 and NPF–81, issued to Southern Nuclear Operating Company (the licensee), for operation of the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (Vogtle), Units 1, and 2, located in Waynesboro, Georgia. Therefore, as required by 10 CFR 51.21, the NRC is issuing this environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would exempt the licensee from the requirements of 10 CFR part 50, Appendix G, footnote 2 to table 1, and allow the licensee to use the methodology in Westinghouse Commercial Atomic Power Report (WCAP), WCAP–16142, Revision 1, ''Reactor Vessel Closure Head/Vessel Flange Requirements Evaluation for Vogtle Units 1 and 2,'' to justify eliminating the reactor vessel/head flange region when determining pressure-temperature (P–T) limits for the reactor vessel.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated February 26, 2004, as supplemented on July 8, and October 22, 2004.

The Need for the Proposed Action: Appendix G of 10 CFR part 50, contains requirements for P–T limits for the primary system, and requirements for metal temperature of the closure head flange and vessel flange regions. The P–T limits are to be determined using the methodology of American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (ASME Code), Section XI, Appendix G, but the flange temperature requirements are specified in 10 CFR part 50, Appendix G. This rule states that the metal temperature at the closure flange regions must exceed the material unirradiated RT_{NDT} by at least 120 °F for normal operation when the pressure exceeds 20 percent of the pre-service hydrostatic test pressure.

This requirement was originally based on concerns about the fracture margin in the closure flange region. During the boltup process, outside surface stresses in this region typically reach over 70 percent of the steady state stress, without being at steady state temperature. The margin of 120 °F and the pressure limitation of 20 percent of hydrostatic pressure were developed in the mid-1970s using the K_{Ia} fracture toughness to ensure that appropriate margins would be maintained.

Improved knowledge of fracture toughness and other issues that affect the integrity of the reactor vessel have led to the recent change to allow the use of K_{Ic} in the development of P–T curves, as contained in ASME Code Case N–640, ''Alternative Reference Fracture Toughness for Development of P–T Limit Curves for Section XI, Division 1.'' ASME Code Case, N–640 has been approved for use without conditions by the NRC staff in Regulatory Guide 1.147, ''Inservice Inspection Code Case Acceptability, ASME Section XI, Division 1,'' published in June 2003.

However, P–T limit curves can still produce operational constraints by limiting the operational range available to the operator during heatup and cooldown of the plant, especially when considering requirements in the closure head flange and the vessel flange regions. Implementing the P–T curves that use K_{Ic} material fracture toughness without exempting the flange requirement of 10 CFR part 50, Appendix G, would place a restricted