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PETITION RULE PRM 50-59

PG&E Letter DCL-94-135

(59FR 23641)

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
DOCKETING & SERVICE
SAFEGUARDS



Mr. Samuel J. Chilk
Secretary of the Commission
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Attn: Docketing and Service Branch

Docket No. 50-275, OL-DPR-80

Docket No. 50-323, OL-DPR-82

Diablo Canyon Units 1 and 2

Virginia Electric and Power Company: Petition for Rulemaking,
Safeguards Contingency Plan and Security Program

Gentlemen:

PG&E is submitting comments in response to the notice in the Federal Register (59 FR 23641), dated May 6, 1994, and invitation to comment on Virginia Electric and Power Company's (VEPCO's) petition for rulemaking to amend 10 CFR 50.54(p), 10 CFR 73.55(g) and Part 73, Appendix C by changing the frequency with which each licensee conducts independent reviews of its security programs and safeguards contingency plan. PG&E supports the petition and believes that the proposed revisions to the regulations are warranted.

Power reactor licensee proficiency and effectiveness in security and safeguards contingency planning has improved steadily to the point where annual audits no longer provide a significant benefit, let alone a benefit commensurate with the cost in dollars and diverted resources. PG&E agrees with VEPCO that a biennial audit frequency would more than adequately provide the requisite feedback and assurance regarding the effectiveness of licensee safeguards contingency plans and security programs. Furthermore, adequate safeguards exist to ensure that changing the audit frequency to two years will have no adverse impact on implementation of nuclear security programs and contingency plans.

PG&E also agrees with VEPCO that an annual audit frequency is not necessary to ensure an adequate safeguards plan and security program, nor is it commensurate with present industry performance and enhancements in this area. Biennial audits would allow licensees to concentrate available audit

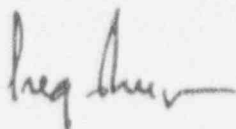
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resources in areas of observed weakness based on performance. Because the costs associated with the annual audit requirements are not commensurate with the safety benefits, amending the existing regulations to permit biennial audits could provide a net safety benefit.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Rueger

cc: L. J. Callan
Mary H. Miller
Kenneth E. Perkins
Sheri R. Peterson
Diablo Distribution

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