

## **U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Public Meeting Summary**

**Title:** Public Meeting to Discuss draft Supplement 55 to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants Regarding Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2 (TAC Nos. MF1832 and MF1833)

**Meeting Identifier:** 20150504

**Date of Meeting:** Tuesday, April 21, 2015

**Location:** Godley Park District, Godley, IL

**Type of Meeting:** Category 3

### **Purpose of the Meeting(s):**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the staff) was to solicit stakeholder comments on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) which was prepared in response to an application submitted by Exelon Generation Company, LLC (Exelon), to renew the operating license for Braidwood Units 1 and 2 (Braidwood) for an additional 20 years. The staff will evaluate comments received both at these meetings and any others received during the comment period, which ended May 12, 2015, and revise the draft SEIS as appropriate. Responses to all comments received will be included in Appendix A of the final SEIS.

### **General Details:**

The NRC held two identical meetings to accommodate interested persons, one in the afternoon and the other in the evening. Both meetings were preceded by an informal open house beginning one hour prior to the meeting where members of the public met with NRC staff and asked questions related to license renewal. The afternoon meeting was scheduled from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST. The evening meeting was scheduled from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. NRC staff members were present. The meetings were facilitated by Ms. Cheryl Hausman, an NRC in-house facilitator. The meetings began with an introduction of NRC staff and a review of meeting ground rules, followed by a presentation on the license renewal process and the findings in the Braidwood draft SEIS by Mr. Tam Tran. The presentation emphasized that the review process was not yet complete and comments were welcome on the draft SEIS. Next, there was a question and answer period on Mr. Tran's presentation. Finally, there was the comment portion of the meetings in which the attendees provided comments.

Approximately 30 people participated in the afternoon meeting, and 21 people participated in the evening meeting. Ten meeting participants provided comments in the afternoon session, and three provided comments in the evening session. In addition to members of the public, meeting participants included representatives from Will County Executive's Office, the Braidwood Chamber of Commerce, Representative Kinzinger's office, and the applicant.

### **Summary of Meeting:**

Both meetings consisted of three parts. The first part was a presentation by Mr. Tran in which he discussed the following: (1) the NRC's regulatory role, (2) the preliminary findings of the environmental review as described in the draft SEIS, and (3) the current schedule for the remainder of the environmental review and how comments can be submitted. The

second part was a question and answer period on the material Mr. Tran presented. The third part was a public comment period.

**Summary of Staff Presentation:**

The NRC conducts license renewal reviews for plants whose owners wish to operate them beyond their initial license period. NRC license renewal reviews address safety issues related to managing the effects of aging and environmental issues related to an additional 20 years of operation. The environmental review performed by the staff resulted in the findings of impacts shown in the table below for the site-specific issues associated with continued operation of Braidwood during the proposed license renewal period.

<b>Resource Areas</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Surface Water	SMALL
Groundwater	SMALL
Terrestrial	SMALL
Aquatic	SMALL to MODERATE
Special Status Species	No effect to May affect, but not likely to adversely affect
Historical and Culture	No adverse effect
Human Health	SMALL
Environmental Justice	See note below*

\*There would be no disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations and subsistence consumption from continued operation of Braidwood during the license renewal period and from cumulative impacts.

The staff also considered cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts include the effects on the environment from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future human actions. These effects not only include the operation of Braidwood but also impacts from activities unrelated to Braidwood, such as future urbanization, other energy producing facilities in the area, and climate change. The cumulative impacts on all resource areas were found to range from SMALL, SMALL to MODERATE, MODERATE, and MODERATE to LARGE. For example, the impact on surface water would be SMALL to MODERATE and the impact on groundwater would be MODERATE to LARGE. The Braidwood facility is not expected to impact surface or groundwater resources, however, increased regional demand on both surface and groundwater resources is expected to grow throughout the license renewal term.

The impact on terrestrial resources would be MODERATE to LARGE primarily due to past habitat alteration and loss on the Braidwood site and within the larger Illinois/Indiana Prairies Level IV Ecoregion.

The impact on aquatic resources would be MODERATE. The NRC staff cannot conclude with certainty that future impacts of energy-generating facilities, urbanization, and transportation development will not result in detectable changes to the aquatic environment of the Illinois portion of the Kankakee River. Continued protection of aquatic habitats through wildlife preserves, parks, and recreational areas, as well as the implementation of the Illinois Wildlife Conservation Plan will likely mitigate such effects.

Global climate change would be MODERATE; this is primarily due to continued increases in Green House Gases (GHG) emission rates. Climate models project that Earth's average surface temperature will continue to increase and climate-related changes will persist.

Therefore, the cumulative impact of GHG emissions on climate change is noticeable but not destabilizing.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) mandates that each environmental impact statement consider alternatives to any proposed major Federal action. The NRC staff initially considered 16 different alternatives, then narrowed those to five alternatives (new nuclear; integrated gasification combined cycle; natural-gas combined-cycle; combination of natural-gas combined-cycle, wind and solar; and purchase power) and considered these five alternatives in-depth. Additionally, the staff considered what would happen if no action were taken and Braidwood shut down at the end of its current license without a specific replacement alternative. The staff's preliminary conclusion is that the environmental impacts of renewal of the operating licenses for Braidwood would be smaller than those of feasible and commercially viable alternatives. The staff concluded that continued operation of the existing Braidwood is the environmentally preferred alternative.

Based on a review of likely environmental impacts from license renewal as well as potential environmental impacts of alternatives to license renewal, the staff's preliminary recommendation in the draft SEIS is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Braidwood are not great enough to deny the option of license renewal for energy-planning decisionmakers.

Comments received by the end of the comment period on May 12, 2015, will be considered by the staff in developing the final SEIS. The final SEIS will contain the staff's final recommendation on the acceptability of license renewal based on the work already performed and any new and significant information received during the comment period.

**Public Participation Themes:**

At both the afternoon and evening meetings, there were no concerns raised on the Braidwood license renewal. Local and state politicians, representatives of trade associations, representatives of the Braidwood Chamber of Commerce, and fishermen expressed praise for the license renewal. They commented that it was a safe and secure generation plant, provided an economic stimulant to the community by providing jobs, and provided plentiful fishing in the associated cooling lake. A complete accounting of the comments can be found in the meeting transcripts which are available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access & Management System (ADAMS) public electronic reading room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>, under the accession numbers listed below.

**Next Step:**

NRC staff will address the comments provided during this meeting as part of the license renewal process for Braidwood. A record of how each comment was addressed will be included in the final SEIS.

**Attachments:**

1. Meeting description and agenda – ML15096A053
2. NRC staff presentation – ML15104A493
3. Meeting transcripts –
  - Afternoon transcript – ML15121A796
  - Evening transcript – ML15121A803

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**ADAMS Accession Nos.:**

**Pkg. ML15121A807                      Memo ML15119A514**

**Afternoon Transcript: ML15121A796 Evening Transcript: ML15121A803**

**\*concurred via email**

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