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Pages 1-65

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS  
LICENSE RENEWAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING PROCESS  
GRAND GULF NUCLEAR STATION  
LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION

+ + + + +

Tuesday, January 31, 2012

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City Hall Chambers  
Port Gibson City Hall  
1005 College Street  
Port Gibson, Mississippi

+ + + + +

7:00 p.m.

BEFORE: BILL MAIER, Facilitator

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<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Welcome and Purpose of Meeting .....	3
Overview of the License Renewal Process .....	10
Overview of the Environmental Review Process .....	19
Public Comments .....	28
Closing .....	64
Adjourn .....	65

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 MR. MAIER: Good afternoon, everyone.  
3 Thank you for coming to today's meeting and showing an  
4 interest  
5 in what your government's business is as it affects  
6 and relates to the environment around the Grand Gulf  
7 Nuclear Plant.

8 My name is Bill Maier, and I work at the  
9 Nuclear Regulatory Commission's, or NRC's, Region IV  
10 office in Arlington, Texas, and it's my pleasure to  
11 serve as the facilitator for tonight's meeting.

12 The purpose of this meeting is twofold:  
13 First it's an opportunity for the NRC to provide  
14 information to you about the process by which it will  
15 review the application by Entergy for the Grand Gulf  
16 Nuclear Plant to operate for an additional 20 years.

17 During that first portion of the meeting,  
18 various NRC folks will talk about the process for  
19 reviewing that application; they'll provide  
20 information about the expected time line for the  
21 review.

22 And after that presentation, we will  
23 provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about  
24 what they just spoke about and about the license  
25 renewal process in general, or specific questions that

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1 you have about it.

2 We hope that all the folks present will  
3 clarify the information that they presented such that  
4 your questions are answered, but if we can't answer  
5 the questions, I'll ensure that the question is  
6 captured, and please get your name and contact  
7 information to me, and we'll try to get an answer to  
8 you on that question.

9 And if you think of a question that  
10 doesn't come up during the question period that you  
11 would like to discuss with the NRC, the folks from the  
12 NRC will be around after the meeting concludes, to  
13 answer any questions.

14 The second and the most important part of  
15 the meeting is the chance for an opportunity for you  
16 to give information and comments to the NRC about what  
17 you think should be included in their consideration of  
18 the review of this license renewal application.

19 Tonight's meeting is just one way of  
20 providing that information. There are other ways that  
21 you will be able to provide the information if you  
22 have information after this meeting that you would  
23 like to get to the NRC during the period that they're  
24 taking comments, and the NRC presenters will give a  
25 little bit more information about how to do that.

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1           There were several things that were  
2 offered to you when you came in and signed in. We  
3 have a couple of cards here. We have a yellow speaker  
4 card for anybody who would like to make some comments  
5 about what the NRC should consider in their review of  
6 the environmental impact of the Grand Gulf  
7 application.

8           And we have a blue card for folks who  
9 don't necessarily want to speak but may want to get  
10 some communication with the NRC in the future. It's a  
11 method by which the NRC can get your contact  
12 information and provide other information to you about  
13 what's happening in this license renewal review  
14 process.

15           A number of folks in the afternoon  
16 session asked if the copies of the slides are  
17 available. We do not have copies of the slides  
18 available, but if you do fill out one of these blue  
19 cards, the NRC folks will be able to get a copy of  
20 what we call the meeting summary to you that will  
21 include the slides as well as the attendance list.

22           There are also feedback forms available  
23 that we are very interested in having you fill out.  
24 The feedback forms tell the NRC how the meeting went  
25 and how it could be improved. The NRC is always

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1 looking to improve its meetings, and your feedback is  
2 very important.

3           You can fill out the feedback form and  
4 give it to any of the folks who are representing the  
5 NRC -- and I'll introduce them all in a second -- or  
6 you can take it home, and if you want to fill it out  
7 and mail it to the NRC, the postage is prepaid, and  
8 you can get it to us that way.

9           At this point I'd like to provide some  
10 brief introductions of the NRC staff who are here to  
11 tell you about the process and to answer whatever  
12 questions you have and to receive what your comments  
13 are.

14           There are two individuals here who are  
15 going to do the lion's share of the meeting, and I'll  
16 introduce them first.     Nate Ferrer:     Nate is the  
17 project manager coordinating the NRC review of the  
18 safety aspects of the license renewal application;  
19 David Drucker:     David is coordinating the NRC review  
20 of the environmental aspects of the application.

21           We also have a number of NRC officials  
22 here.     Dave Wrona:     Dave is the chief of the  
23 Environmental Projects Branch in the NRC's Division of  
24 License Renewal at NRC headquarters.     Dennis Morey:  
25 Dennis is the chief of the Safety Projects Branch in

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1 that same division. And Rajender Auluck: Raj is a  
2 branch chief in the Safety Review Branch for that  
3 division.

4 We also have Laura Uselding. Laura is  
5 the public affairs officer. She works for the NRC's  
6 Office of Public Affairs and is the public affairs  
7 officer in our Region IV office, where I work.

8 The NRC's resident inspector staff is  
9 also supporting this meeting. We have Richard Smith.  
10 Richard is the senior resident inspector, the NRC's  
11 senior resident inspector and the agency's eyes and  
12 ears for the oversight of the daily plant operations.

13 And also assisting, who you already met,  
14 is Ally Farrell. Ally is the site administrative  
15 assistant at the site, working for the NRC.

16 We also have some local officials who  
17 come to this meeting. We have Mayor Fred Reeves.  
18 Thank you for coming, Mayor Reeves.

19 And another official of some sort that I  
20 didn't introduce at this afternoon's meeting: Cheryl  
21 Chubb. Cheryl is an emergency planner with the  
22 Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. Cheryl  
23 is an emergency planner that helps to plan the offsite  
24 response to an emergency at Grand Gulf and Tensas  
25 Parish.

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1           You also probably noticed two deputies  
2 that are standing in the doorways. We have Deputies  
3 Smith and Claiborne here from the Claiborne County  
4 Sheriff's office. They are here for your protection.  
5 It makes good sense in a public meeting to have folks  
6 who you can turn to if you get into trouble and you  
7 need some help.

8           And I'd also like to introduce two of the  
9 most important people here tonight. Mr. Bob Smylie is  
10 working the sound system. And Ms. Penny Bynum is  
11 transcribing this meeting. She is capturing it into  
12 written form, word for word, and she will enter it  
13 into the public record. It will be entered into the  
14 public record, her transcription.

15           This lets the NRC reviewers know what  
16 comments were provided during the meeting, and it lets  
17 the world know that your comments were provided to the  
18 NRC and that they need to consider them in their  
19 review.

20           Ms. Bynum is recording the meeting from  
21 the microphones, and because of this, there are  
22 certain rules that we need to follow:

23           First one is, only one person speaks at a  
24 time. More than one person speaking at the same time  
25 can result in important information being lost in the

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1 transcription process. Second rule is side  
2 conversations, please take them outside the room.  
3 Outside noises can also interfere with the ability to  
4 get a clean recording.

5 And from this point on -- and I think  
6 I've already done it -- all cell phones should be  
7 either turned off or put on vibrate. Let me say that  
8 one more time: All cell phones from this point on  
9 should be either turned off or put on vibrate.

10 And most importantly, any speaker who is  
11 being recognized at the time must have me come to them  
12 with this hand mike and speak into it, or if you're  
13 going to provide comments, you'll have to go to the  
14 podium mic to make your comments. This is vitally  
15 important to ensure that the important information  
16 that you have to provide to the NRC is accurately  
17 captured.

18 And one thing I didn't mention in this  
19 afternoon's meeting, but it is important for Ms.  
20 Bynum -- when either asking a question or making a  
21 comment, please start out by giving your name and your  
22 affiliation, if you have one, so that she can put that  
23 into the record.

24 I talked about the yellow cards, and I  
25 haven't gotten any from anybody, so that may make the

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1 comment period really short, but if I do get some, I  
2 will call folks up to the podium to make their comment  
3 in the order that I receive the cards.

4 It's very important that you fill out the  
5 card clearly so that I don't mispronounce your name  
6 and get it into the record wrongly. And when I  
7 recognize you, you can come up and make your comment.

8 We don't expect that there will be any  
9 time limit for making comments about the things that  
10 you want the NRC to look it, and I already mentioned  
11 the blue card.

12 And one of the things that's my duty to  
13 inform you of is the safety information for tonight's  
14 meeting, and that consists of knowing where the  
15 restrooms are -- very important.

16 They're at the bottom of the staircase  
17 here, just underneath it, a men's and a women's  
18 restroom together, right underneath the stairwell.

19 And across from the restrooms on the  
20 first floor is the water fountain, if anybody needs to  
21 get some water. There's a restroom up here in this  
22 corner, but Debra tells me don't use it if you need to  
23 use the restroom for anything other than washing your  
24 hands, because the door won't latch.

25 And if we do need to evacuate the

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1 building for whatever reason, what we have to do is  
2 down this stairwell and out the door into the parking  
3 lot. If there's a problem getting down this  
4 stairwell, there's a door in the room across the hall  
5 that leads to an external staircase that we can use to  
6 get to the parking lot.

7 Are there any questions for me on what  
8 I've gone over so far?

9 (No response.)

10 MR. MAIER: If not, let's silence our  
11 cell phones, and we'll start the NRC presentation.

12 MR. FERRER: Thank you, Bill.

13 Good evening. My name is Nate Ferrer,  
14 and as Bill mentioned, I am the safety project manager  
15 at the NRC coordinating the staff's review of the  
16 Grand Gulf license renewal application.

17 I'd like to thank you all for taking the  
18 time to the meeting. Tonight we'll be providing an  
19 overview of the license renewal review process, which  
20 includes both a safety and an environmental review.

21 We'll describe ways in which the public  
22 can participate in the renewal process, and I'd like  
23 to reiterate that the most important part of tonight's  
24 meeting is to receive any comments that you may have  
25 on the scope of the environmental review. I hope the

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1 information we provide will help you understand the  
2 license renewal review process and the roles that you  
3 all can have in that process.

4 Now, before I get into the discussion of  
5 license renewal process, I'd like to take a minute to  
6 talk about the NRC in terms of what we do and what our  
7 mission is.

8 The NRC is a federal agency that  
9 regulates the civilian use of nuclear material, and  
10 the Atomic Energy Act authorizes the NRC to grant 40-  
11 year operating licenses for nuclear power reactors.

12 I'll highlight that the 40-year term was  
13 based primarily on economic considerations and  
14 antitrust factors and not on safety or technical  
15 limitations. The Atomic Energy Act also allows for  
16 license renewal, which is what we're here to talk  
17 about tonight.

18 The National Environmental Policy Act of  
19 1969, or NEPA, established a national policy for  
20 considering the impact of federal decision-making on  
21 the human environment, and Dave Drucker will discuss  
22 NEPA in greater detail during his portion of the  
23 presentation.

24 The NRC's mission is to ensure adequate  
25 protection of public health and safety, to promote the

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1 common defense and security, and to protect the  
2 environment. We accomplish this mission through a  
3 combination of regulatory programs and processes such  
4 as establishing rules and regulations, conducting  
5 inspections, issuing enforcement actions, and  
6 assessing licensee performance. We also evaluate  
7 operating experience from nuclear plants across the  
8 country and internationally as well.

9 The NRC has resident inspectors at all  
10 operating nuclear power plants, and as Bill mentioned  
11 earlier, Rich Smith, who's here with us tonight, is  
12 the senior resident at Grand Gulf. And these  
13 inspectors are considered the eyes and ears of the NRC  
14 and carry out our safety mission on a daily basis, and  
15 they're on the front lines of ensuring acceptable  
16 safety performance and compliance with regulatory  
17 requirements.

18 I would like to mention a few very  
19 important areas of NRC oversight that routinely come  
20 up during our interactions with the public. NRC staff  
21 address these areas of performance every day as part  
22 of the ongoing oversight provided for all power  
23 reactors.

24 They include current safety performance,  
25 emergency planning, and security. For specific

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1 information on current performance of Grand Gulf, you  
2 can use the link provided on this slide, and this is  
3 also provided in your handout.

4 The NRC monitors and provides regulatory  
5 oversight of activities in these areas on an ongoing  
6 basis under the current operating license, and  
7 therefore, we do not reevaluate them in the license  
8 renewal process. And that's not to say they are not  
9 important; we just don't duplicate the regulatory  
10 effort.

11 Another issue that is addressed under our  
12 ongoing regulatory oversight is the NRC's response to  
13 the accident at the Fukushima Dai-Ichi power plant in  
14 Japan. Since the accident at Fukushima, the NRC has  
15 taken multiple steps to ensure the safe operation of  
16 nuclear power plants both now and in the future.

17 As part of its initial response to the  
18 accident, the NRC inspected all of the nation's  
19 nuclear power plants in order to assess disaster  
20 readiness and compliance with current regulations.

21 The NRC then issued the Near-Term Task  
22 Force Report, which provided near-term recommendations  
23 and a suggested framework for us to move forward in  
24 the longer term.

25 This report was issued on July 12, and

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1 the results were discussed in a public meeting on July  
2 28. As a result, the Task Force presented 12  
3 overarching recommendations for improvement, and these  
4 recommendations are applicable to operating reactors,  
5 regardless of their status in the license renewal  
6 process.

7 The NRC has prioritized these  
8 recommendations, and the Commission has directed the  
9 staff to move forward on those that can be pursued  
10 without delay. The staff plans to issue related  
11 orders and demands for information by March of this  
12 year. To date, the NRC has not identified any issues  
13 as part of these activities that call into question  
14 the safety of any nuclear facility.

15 And I'll reemphasize also that this  
16 review process is going on independent of license  
17 renewal, and any changes that are identified as  
18 necessary will be implemented for all licensees. More  
19 information on the NRC's post-Fukushima activities can  
20 be found on the NRC's website by clicking on Japan  
21 Nuclear Accident-NRC Actions on the home page, or  
22 directly through the web address provided on this  
23 slide. There are also a limited number of copies of  
24 the Near-Term Task Force Report available at the table  
25 in the back of the room.

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1           At this point I'll move on to Grand Gulf  
2 and the license renewal review process. The NRC  
3 received Grand Gulf's application for license renewal  
4 on November 1, 2011, requesting an additional 20 years  
5 of operation.

6           The current operating license for Grand  
7 Gulf expires in 2024, and I'll note that licensees can  
8 submit an application for license renewal after they  
9 have operated for 20 years. The NRC has determined  
10 that 20 years of operation provides enough operating  
11 experience information for the staff to make an  
12 informed decision on renewal.

13           The first step in the license renewal  
14 process is to perform an acceptance and sufficiency  
15 review of the application. The purpose of this review  
16 is to determine if the applicant has provided all of  
17 the required information.

18           The required information includes things  
19 such as technical information about plant structures  
20 and components and how the applicant proposes to  
21 manage the aging of those structures and components.

22           Technical specifications define the  
23 operating parameters of the plant, and the application  
24 indicates if any changes or additions to the technical  
25 specifications are necessary.

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1           The application also includes an  
2 environmental report, which is the applicant's  
3 assessment of the environmental impacts of continued  
4 operation.

5           If the applicant has provided all the  
6 required information, then it is considered acceptable  
7 and is put on the NRC's formal docket, and the staff  
8 will perform a full review. For Grand Gulf, the  
9 license renewal application was formally accepted on  
10 December 16 of last year.

11           This flow chart highlights that the  
12 license renewal review involves two parallel paths:  
13 the safety review and the environmental review, and  
14 these two reviews evaluate separate aspects of the  
15 application. It also shows all of the considerations  
16 in the Commission's decision of whether to renew an  
17 operating license.

18           I'll explain the dotted line, which shows  
19 the hearing process. And this process may be  
20 conducted if interested stakeholders submit concerns  
21 or contentions, and their request for a hearing is  
22 granted.

23           The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board,  
24 which is an adjudicatory panel, will conduct the  
25 hearings, and the Commission will consider the outcome

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1 in its decision on whether or not to renew the  
2 license.

3 Now I'll describe the safety review in a  
4 little more detail. There are two main principles  
5 that guide the license renewal safety review. The  
6 first principle is that the current regulatory process  
7 is adequate to ensure that all operating plants  
8 maintain an acceptable level of safety.

9 The second principle is that the same  
10 rules that apply under the current license will apply  
11 during the additional 20 years of operation and, in  
12 addition, a renewed license will include conditions  
13 that must be met to ensure that applicants adequately  
14 manage the effects of aging and maintain the same  
15 acceptable level of safety for the additional 20 years  
16 of operation or, in other words, what is being done  
17 today will continue, plus a lot more, to ensure the  
18 continued safe operation of the plant.

19 The safety review focuses on several  
20 types of systems, structures, and components. It  
21 looks at safety-related systems, structures, and  
22 components, as well as nonsafety-related equipment  
23 that could affect the safety-related equipment if they  
24 failed.

25 An additional category that we look at

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1 are systems, structures, and components that are  
2 relied upon for compliance with the regulations that  
3 you see listed on this slide.

4 The safety review focuses on the effects  
5 of aging on all of these different types of systems,  
6 structures, or components, and the main objective in  
7 the staff's review is to determine if the aging  
8 effects will be adequately managed by the applicant.

9 Now that I've described what we are  
10 reviewing during the process, I'll talk about how we  
11 perform that review. The NRC has a team of  
12 approximately 30 technical reviewers and contractors  
13 that review the application and supporting  
14 documentation from our headquarters in Washington, DC.

15 The staff also comes onsite for three  
16 weeks to conduct audits in which we verify the  
17 technical basis of the application and confirm the  
18 applicant's programs and activities are consistent  
19 with how they're described in the application.

20 In addition, a team of specialized  
21 inspectors from one of our regional offices travel to  
22 the site to verify that the aging-management programs  
23 are being implemented or planned consistent with the  
24 application.

25 The staff documents the basis and

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1 conclusions of its review in a safety evaluation  
2 report. A final step in the safety review process is  
3 an independent review by the Advisory Committee on  
4 Reactor Safeguards. This committee is a group of  
5 scientists and nuclear safety experts who serve as a  
6 consulting body to the Commission.

7 The committee performs an independent  
8 review of the application as well as the staff's  
9 safety evaluation report and inspection findings and  
10 makes a recommendation to the Commission.

11 This slide shows the important milestones  
12 for the safety review process. And I'll note that  
13 these dates are tentative, and if any significant  
14 issues do arise, delays may result.

15 I'll also note that the safety evaluation  
16 report, which is indicated as SER on this slide, is a  
17 publicly available report that documents our results  
18 of our review. And the Advisory Committee on Reactor  
19 Safeguards meetings, which is indicated as ACRS on  
20 this slide, are -- these meetings are open to the  
21 public, and they're held at our headquarters in  
22 Washington, DC.

23 This concludes the description of the  
24 safety review, and I'll hand it over to Dave Drucker  
25 to talk about the environmental review.

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1 MR. DRUCKER: Thank you, Nate. And good  
2 evening. My name is David Drucker, and my focus is on  
3 the environmental review.

4 The review is performed in accordance  
5 with the National Environmental Policy Act, commonly  
6 referred to as NEPA, and NEPA established a national  
7 policy for considering environmental impacts for  
8 federal environmental reviews.

9 All federal agencies must follow a  
10 systematic approach in evaluating potential impacts of  
11 their significant actions and also assess alternatives  
12 to those actions. The NEPA process involves public  
13 participation and public disclosure.

14 The NRC's environmental regulations  
15 implementing the requirements of NEPA are contained in  
16 10 CFR 51. Our environmental review considers the  
17 impact of license renewal and any mitigation for those  
18 impacts considered significant.

19 We also consider the impacts of  
20 alternatives to license renewal, including the impacts  
21 of not issuing a renewed license. We document our  
22 review in an Environmental Impact Statement which is  
23 made publicly available.

24 Ultimately the purpose of the  
25 environmental review is to determine whether the

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1 environmental impacts of license renewal are  
2 reasonable and, in combination with other reviews, to  
3 make a recommendation to the Commission whether to  
4 renew the license or not.

5 For a license renewal review, the NRC  
6 environmental staff looks at a wide range of potential  
7 impacts. Additionally, we consult with various  
8 federal, state, and local officials, as well as  
9 leaders of Indian nations.

10 Examples include the US Fish & Wildlife  
11 Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the  
12 Louisiana and Mississippi state historic preservation  
13 officers, Louisiana and Mississippi tribal nations  
14 with historic ties to the area around the plant. We  
15 gather pertinent information from these sources and  
16 ensure it is considered in our analysis.

17 The environmental review begins with a  
18 scoping process, which is an assessment of the  
19 specific impacts and significant issues that the staff  
20 should consider in preparing the Grand Gulf  
21 Environmental Impact Statement.

22 Currently this is where we are in the  
23 process. Information that we gather from you tonight  
24 and in the next few weeks will be considered and  
25 included in the Environmental Impact Statement.

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1           We've recognized that some impacts are  
2 similar if not identical at all nuclear power plants,  
3 so to improve efficiency, we developed a Generic  
4 Environmental Impact Statement that addresses a number  
5 of impacts common to all nuclear power plants. The  
6 staff supplements that Generic Environmental Impact  
7 Statement with a site-specific statement in which we  
8 will address issues that are specific to Grand Gulf.

9           The staff also reexamines the conclusions  
10 reached in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement  
11 to determine if there is any new and significant  
12 information that would change those conclusions.

13           The scoping period started on December  
14 29, 2011, when the notice of intent to prepare an  
15 Environmental Impact Statement and conduct scoping was  
16 published in the Federal Register.

17           The NRC will accept comments on the scope  
18 of the environmental review until February 27, 2012.  
19 In general we are looking for information about the  
20 environmental impacts from the continued operation of  
21 Grand Gulf.

22           You can assist this process by telling  
23 us, for example, what aspects of your local community  
24 we should focus on; what local environmental, social,  
25 and economic issues the NRC should examine during our

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1 review; what other major projects are in process or  
2 planned in the area, and what reasonable alternatives  
3 are most approximately for this region.

4 These are just some of the examples of  
5 the input we seek through the environmental scoping  
6 process. We don't know your community as well as you  
7 do, so your comments help to ensure a thorough review.

8 Public comments are an important part of  
9 the environmental review process, so how do we use  
10 your comments? All of your comments to us, whether  
11 provided verbally during this meeting or in a written  
12 letter, fax, or email, are considered and addressed.  
13 We respond to each comment as part of the  
14 Environmental Impact Statement.

15 The Environmental Impact Statement is one  
16 of the factors, as well as several of the others shown  
17 here, that will influence the Commission's decision to  
18 review the license or not.

19 In addition to providing verbal and  
20 written comments at this meeting, there are other ways  
21 you can submit comments. You can submit comments  
22 online using the federal rulemaking website at the  
23 regulations.gov website. Enter the key word NRC-2011-  
24 0262; this will bring you to a list of Federal  
25 Register notices.

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1           The very first one will say -- at the top  
2 will say, Entergy Operations, Inc., Notice of Intent  
3 to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and  
4 Conduct Scoping Process for Grand Gulf Nuclear Station  
5 Unit 1. So you'll know you're on the right page.

6           And there's an icon on the right-hand  
7 side of that page that will enable you to submit a  
8 comment. If you have any problems with that, please  
9 give me a call, and I can walk you through it.

10           Also you can fax your comments to the  
11 number shown above, and if you do fax, please  
12 reference Grand Gulf License Renewal right on the fax.

13           Please note that comments will not be  
14 edited to remove any identifying or contact  
15 information, so do not include any information in  
16 comments that you don't want publicly disclosed.

17           And as I mentioned, the deadline for  
18 comments is February 27, 2012.

19           Also, written comments can be mailed to  
20 the chief of our Rules, Announcements, and Directives  
21 Branch at the address provided on this slide. And  
22 finally, if you happen to be traveling to Washington,  
23 DC, you can provide written comments in person during  
24 business hours.

25           Well, this slide shows important

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1 milestones. And as Nate said, these dates are subject  
2 to change based on the progress of the review. The  
3 opportunities to submit contentions for a hearing  
4 closes on February 27, 2012, and the opportunity to  
5 submit environmental comments closes on February 27,  
6 2012.

7 Please note that a draft Supplemental  
8 Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to be  
9 issued for public comment in December 2012, with an  
10 associated public meeting to receive your comments on  
11 this preliminary report.

12 Nate and I are the primary points of  
13 contact at the NRC for license renewal issues for  
14 Grand Gulf. Our contact information is provided on  
15 this slide, and it's also in the handout that's  
16 available at the desk out front.

17 A hard copy of the license renewal  
18 application and the environmental report is provided  
19 on the table out back there, and it's also found in  
20 the local library shown on here the slide. The draft  
21 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement will also  
22 be available at this library when it is published for  
23 comment.

24 These documents will also be on the NRC's  
25 website at the web address shown at the bottom of the

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1 slide, that is also contained in your handout.

2 As you came in, you were asked to fill  
3 out a registration card at our reception table. If  
4 you've included your address on that card, we will  
5 mail a CD copy of the draft and the final  
6 Environmental Impact Statement to you.

7 This concludes my presentation, but  
8 before we get into the comment period or any questions  
9 in general, I just want to make sure, if there are any  
10 questions about what I've presented or what Nate  
11 presented tonight, this is the time to ask those  
12 questions. Looking left, looking right.

13 (No response.)

14 MR. DRUCKER: This concludes my  
15 presentation. I want to thank everyone coming out  
16 tonight. I know it's not easy to get away in the  
17 evening, and I really appreciate it, and I turn the  
18 microphone back over to Bill Maier. Thank you.

19 MR. MAIER: Thank you, David.

20 As I mentioned earlier, we didn't have  
21 copies of the slides here for you, and you saw a  
22 number of email addresses and addresses and website  
23 and things. If you got a copy of the welcome sheet  
24 that's front and back, it has a lot of all that  
25 important information, if you wanted to provide that

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1 information to the NRC or if you wanted to look at  
2 some of those websites.

3 Before we go to the comment period I'll  
4 just urge that if anybody does have -- excuse me.  
5 When we got to the question period, I'll urge that if  
6 anybody has a yellow card that they'd like to make a  
7 comment for the NRC to consider, please hold that card  
8 up; I'll get it, and when we get to the comments, I'll  
9 call on you to come up.

10 Now we have an opportunity to ask  
11 clarifying questions of the NRC presenters and others  
12 here.

13 If you have a question, just wave your  
14 hand. I'll come by with the handheld mic, and the  
15 folks with the NRC will be able to respond on the  
16 podium mic.

17 I'll ask that you please identify  
18 yourself, and if you have an affiliation with an  
19 organization, please provide that before you ask your  
20 question.

21 And remember the ground rules, please:  
22 Only one person speaks at a time, and the person  
23 asking a question needs to speak into the microphone.

24 I also want to make a point, and there  
25 are several questions that you may have in your mind

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1 about Grand Gulf that aren't necessarily related to  
2 the presentations you just received, and there may be  
3 questions that the staff here at this meeting may not  
4 be completely qualified to answer.

5 That's not to say your question shouldn't  
6 be asked; it's just that we may not be able to provide  
7 an answer to questions about things outside of the  
8 license renewal process.

9 We've got Rich here. Rick is  
10 knowledgeable about plant operations. He'll be able  
11 to provide whatever answers he can, but if you have a  
12 question and we aren't able to answer it, I would urge  
13 you to get that question on the back of one of these  
14 blue cards with your contact information -- maybe  
15 write "question on back" on the front of the card, and  
16 when David gets those or when Nate gets those, we can  
17 get those back to the folks who can provide you a  
18 complete question -- complete answer to your question.

19 So with that, I'll ask if there are any  
20 questions by anybody in the audience.

21 Okay. And I'll ask you to give your name  
22 and your affiliation before you ask your question, and  
23 folks from the NRC will try to answer.

24 MS. HILLEGAS: My name is Jan Hillegas.  
25 I'm the acting chair of the Green Party of

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1 Mississippi.

2 I have several questions here, and I  
3 would like -- though they are questions, I would like  
4 them also to be sure to be in the realm of being taken  
5 into consideration as things that I think you should  
6 be thinking about, too; not just that I want a bit of  
7 information tonight, but I want you to be thinking  
8 about most of these things, too, in what you do.

9 And since I have several questions, I  
10 would be very glad to be interrupted when anybody else  
11 has other questions; otherwise I will go down them.

12 My first question is to just get my  
13 bearings a little bit, to be sure. I'm thinking that  
14 Grand Gulf went online with a license that started  
15 probably in 1984? Is that correct? And so it had a  
16 40-year license which runs out November 1, 2024.

17 And at that time it was a 40-year  
18 license, but at this time 20-year licenses are  
19 available -- potentially available.

20 MR. FERRER: The license renewal process,  
21 if approved, would add an additional 20 years to the  
22 end of that expiration date. So if approved, the  
23 license would then expire in 2044 rather than 2024.

24 MS. HILLEGAS: And the reason for doing  
25 this process in 2012 is? -- 2012-23 is?

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1 MR. FERRER: You're asking why they've  
2 come in now.

3 MS. HILLEGAS: Uh-huh.

4 MR. FERRER: Well, our regulations allow  
5 for licensees to submit an application after they've  
6 been operating for 20 years, and that provides us with  
7 enough of operating experience to make an informed  
8 decision.

9 As far as why they chose now rather than  
10 a few years down the road is a decision that the  
11 applicant makes.

12 MR. MAIER: Let me ask if anybody else  
13 has a question they'd like to ask, and we'll get back  
14 to Jan.

15 (No response.)

16 MS. HILLEGAS: I drove around this  
17 afternoon after the first session, to remind myself  
18 where things are and so on.

19 As I was coming back toward Port Gibson  
20 and I was near the plant at the time, the plant being  
21 on my right, on the left, quite near the road, a man  
22 was burning something, quite high flames going up in  
23 the air.

24 And of course there's grass and there are  
25 trees both -- not right where the fire was, but on

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1 that side of the road, and across the road between me  
2 and the plant of course there were trees and grass and  
3 so on.

4 I don't know whether anyone knows whether  
5 it's legal to burn things like that out in the county,  
6 but I couldn't help wondering, if that fire had been  
7 done maybe not in quite such a relatively wet time of  
8 year as we're in now and the fire had become like some  
9 of the fires that have taken thousands of acres last  
10 year in other parts of the United States, what could  
11 have happened to Grand Gulf if that fire had just gone  
12 on its way?

13 What -- I know that an issue in past  
14 years has been quite small number of fire departments,  
15 vehicles, personnel in the county. What gives you --  
16 what assurance could people in this community have  
17 that such a fire that went beyond where the man was  
18 trying to burn, went toward the plant -- what  
19 assurance could people have that there would -- that  
20 that fire could be put out before it caused a problem?  
21 And if could not, what kind of a problem would be  
22 caused to the kind of plant that Grand Gulf is by such  
23 an out-of-control fire?

24 MR. MAIER: As I mentioned, Rich Smith is  
25 the NRC's eyes and ears, and he looks over the plant.

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1 Rich, are you interested in maybe telling  
2 what would be the way of mitigating something like  
3 this?

4 MR. SMITH: Well, first of all, the  
5 plant, in its location there, is relatively -- the  
6 surroundings of the plant, there are no trees on the  
7 plant site itself, or flammable materials.

8 I'm sure a fire of that duration, the  
9 state would bring as many people in as possible or try  
10 to mitigate it. As far as the plant itself, they have  
11 their procedures and things that they have to deal  
12 with, events like that, external events, and they  
13 would take the appropriate actions to protect the  
14 plant and also protect the public.

15 Does that answer your question? I mean,  
16 there's quite a bit of standoff difference between the  
17 tree line and the nuclear plant.

18 MS. HILLEGAS: You're saying that a fire  
19 could not get there; you're saying a fire could not  
20 get to the plant.

21 MR. SMITH: I'm saying that there's a  
22 lack of flammable material in trees and things like  
23 that up close. There's basically all buildings and  
24 concrete and structures like that.

25 MS. HILLEGAS: And if a strong wind got

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1 behind burning trees that didn't start out on the  
2 property, what is the potential?

3 MR. SMITH: I would only be speculating  
4 on what, you know, could happen. I know they have  
5 evaluated the plant site. It's pretty much cleared  
6 off where the buildings are and everything.

7 The plant protected area is surrounded by  
8 a mile-long fence all the way around, and -- over a  
9 mile. So I don't believe there's the possibility that  
10 could be -- but I'm not speaking as an expert; I'm  
11 just speaking as just generally how the plant's laid  
12 out and everything.

13 MR. MAIER: Rich, let me ask a follow-up  
14 question. Is there a firefighting organization that's  
15 part of the plant staff onsite?

16 MR. SMITH: Yeah. What you have is a  
17 fire brigade made up of operators that respond to  
18 fires in the protected area, and then they have  
19 agreements with the local fire departments to come and  
20 assist them if needed.

21 Like I said, a fire of this magnitude, I  
22 would believe that there would be ample amount of  
23 response from both state and even federal agencies, if  
24 necessary, to protect the plant.

25 Does that answer your question?

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1 MS. HILLEGAS: That answers that part of  
2 it. Could someone else talk about the status of fire  
3 stations and personnel at this time?

4 MR. MAIER: I don't think we have  
5 somebody to represent the offsite fire departments who  
6 might be able to answer that question for you, but if  
7 you want to fill that out on a blue card, we might be  
8 able to get that information from whoever is qualified  
9 to answer it.

10 Questions from other attendees, other  
11 folks in the audience?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. MAIER: Jan, you have the microphone  
14 again.

15 MS. HILLEGAS: Okay. Thank you.

16 It's my understanding -- but correct me  
17 if I'm wrong -- that all the radioactive waste that's  
18 been produced by Grand Gulf is still on the site after  
19 these 27 years. If that is the case, can someone give  
20 the approximate square footage or cubic yards or  
21 whatever number you can give about that? And then  
22 just a general idea of how much more accumulates every  
23 year.

24 MR. MAIER: I don't know if Rich feels  
25 qualified to answer that question. I don't know if

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1 anybody from the site is -- feels qualified to answer  
2 that question who might be here.

3 MR. SMITH: First of all, you've got the  
4 classification of radioactive waste. Anything's that  
5 low-level radioactive waste has been shipped and is  
6 shipped off the site routinely, sent to appropriate  
7 facilities.

8 What you're probably referring to is the  
9 spent fuel. All right? And so what the licensee is  
10 doing and has been doing over several years, with  
11 approval from the NRC, is that there are taking the  
12 fuel out of their spent-fuel pool when it's aged, put  
13 it into canisters, put it into shielded containers,  
14 and storing it on seismically built pads inside the  
15 protected area, and they put anywhere from five to  
16 seven every other year out there.

17 These hold 68 bundles of spent fuel, and  
18 I believe there's approximately 17 to 19 out there  
19 right now, and like I said, the NRC approved all that,  
20 the design of the overpacks and the process by which  
21 the licensee executes that.

22 MR. MAIER: Let me ask a question of the  
23 NRC reviewers from headquarters. Is the accumulation  
24 of spent fuel an impact that the NRC reviews in its  
25 review of this license renewal application? And if

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1 not, where is it taken into account?

2 MR. DRUCKER: Yeah, spent fuel is not a  
3 part of the license renewal review; it's an ongoing  
4 issue that is managed on a regular basis at the plant.

5 And the gentleman in the back grabbed the  
6 environmental report. Were you looking up to see if  
7 that information on the previous question was answered  
8 in that?

9 VOICE: Yes, I was.

10 MR. MAIER: Thanks. Other questions?

11 MS. HILLEGAS: You said some of those  
12 things pretty fast, and I'm sorry; I didn't get it all  
13 there.

14 Spent fuel goes first to a pool, where  
15 it's cooled, I guess. Is that -- and then you said to  
16 canisters, and there was something in between and then  
17 seismically built pads, and then five to seven  
18 something.

19 MR. SMITH: I'll go through it again.

20 So the take the fuel out of the reactor  
21 over many years, and these bundles are stored in a  
22 spent-fuel pool. After they have a requisite number  
23 of time to allow the thermal heat to dissipate from  
24 the decay process that occurs after fission's done,  
25 these bundles are put into what they call multipurpose

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1 canister, where they can store 68 bundles, and it's a  
2 stainless-steel canister that is welded shut and  
3 helium dried, so there's no moisture in them.

4 Then these canisters are put in an  
5 overpack, which is a high-storm canister which has  
6 boron-impregnated concrete poured around it for  
7 shielding purposes, and they're very substantial.  
8 They've gone through a lot of testing on these  
9 canisters for weather, tornadoes, things like that.

10 And they're put out on a pad that has  
11 been seismically built in case an earthquake occurs,  
12 so that the pad's not going to crack and things like  
13 that.

14 And there's ample storage space there,  
15 and every other year the licensee has gone to  
16 campaigns where they remove more bundles from the  
17 spent-fuel pool, put them in these canisters and place  
18 them out on the pad in a very controlled process, and  
19 it's about five to seven a year.

20 MS. HILLEGAS: Five to seven?

21 MR. SMITH: Five to seven canisters every  
22 other year.

23 MR. MAIER: Jan, I think since we're in  
24 the evening meeting, if there are questions that are  
25 related to general information about the plant, as I

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1 mentioned before, the NRC folks will make themselves  
2 available after we conclude the meeting so that  
3 questions can be answered. I don't know if that's an  
4 agreeable situation for you or not, but that might be  
5 better for the audience as a whole to be able to  
6 adjourn and get their comments in.

7 Are there any people that have any other  
8 questions that are related to the license renewal  
9 application?

10 Mayor Reeves?

11 MAYOR REEVES: I have two questions. Has  
12 any plant been denied renewal in the past? Never?

13 MR. FERRER: There have not been any  
14 applications that have been denied once formally  
15 accepted by the NRC, but that's not to say that there  
16 hasn't been applications that have maybe been sent  
17 back or reviews that have been essentially halted for  
18 significant changes.

19 MAYOR REEVES: My other question is what  
20 effect would the current upgrade at Grand Gulf have to  
21 do with the process? Would that have an impact on the  
22 process?

23 MR. FERRER: The EPU process that  
24 currently ongoing is its own independent process.  
25 There are aspect of the plant modifications that are

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1 going on that could impact our review, but we have  
2 processes in place to account for that.

3 MR. MAIER: Any other questions related  
4 to the license renewal process?

5 Cheryl, please give your name and your  
6 affiliation.

7 MS. CHUBB: Cheryl Chubb, Louisiana  
8 Department of Environmental Quality.

9 Just expanding on what Mayor Reeves  
10 asked, how many licenses have been renewed so far?

11 MR. FERRER: The current number is 71 out  
12 of the 104 that we have.

13 MR. MAIER: Other questions related to  
14 license renewal?

15 MS. HILLEGAS: Is any part of the -- does  
16 any part of the renewal process or evaluation by the  
17 NRC assume any date that the spent fuel will be stored  
18 offsite or that decontamination technology will be in  
19 place?

20 MR. FERRER: The spent fuel that is  
21 stored onsite is actually controlled under its own  
22 license and its very own process. I don't have the  
23 details as far as when that's set to expire, but it is  
24 its own process, and it's controlled.

25 MR. MAIER: In my opening -- go ahead.

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1 MR. SMITH: I just wanted to add  
2 something. Before they can store any spent fuel in  
3 these canisters, they have to have an approval by the  
4 NRC to do this. They had to submit an application to  
5 be able to be able to store fuel onsite and ensure  
6 that they meet all the appropriate specifications and  
7 things like that, and it is governed by another group  
8 that reviews all this and actually inspects it on a  
9 yearly basis; comes out and makes sure everything's  
10 being done properly per regulations.

11 MR. MAIER: In my opening remarks I  
12 stated that the most important portion of this meeting  
13 was the portion in which members of the local  
14 community, members of the public, and local officials  
15 would have an opportunity to provide comments to the  
16 NRC for things to consider in the environmental  
17 review, either comments of what would be the impact of  
18 additional 20 years or the impacts of denial of an  
19 additional 20 years of operation.

20 Although I haven't received any yellow  
21 cards, I'll ask that if anybody does have comments,  
22 which we consider to be the most important thing to  
23 come out of this meeting, if anybody would like to  
24 make a comment, would you please raise your hand and  
25 let me know, because we'll try to get to the comments,

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1 and then if we have additional time for questions, we  
2 might do some questions.

3 Is there anybody who has a comment that  
4 they'd like the NRC to consider in their review of the  
5 environmental impact for this license renewal  
6 application?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. MAIER: Jan, do you have additional  
9 questions that are related to license renewal?

10 MS. HILLEGAS: And remember that I asked  
11 that my questions be considered comments, though  
12 they're framed as questions.

13 Can someone tell me how far in advance  
14 the disaster at Fukushima was predicted? It happened  
15 on March 11 of last year. How far in advance was it  
16 predicted? That's the first part of a few questions.

17 MR. MAIER: Jan, I have to ask you why  
18 you would like that to be considered as a comment for  
19 the license renewal for the Grand Gulf plant.

20 MS. HILLEGAS: It's the first of some  
21 questions, and it will be clearer with the subsequent  
22 parts.

23 MR. MAIER: Can I ask you what your  
24 estimate is of how many questions you have and how  
25 long it would take to answer them?

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1 MS. HILLEGAS: (away from microphone).

2 MR. MAIER: Please restate your question  
3 about Fukushima. I don't know that we have anybody  
4 here to answer it, but if there is somebody who feels  
5 qualified to answer, we'll see if they want to step  
6 up.

7 MS. HILLEGAS: Okay. Well, today I  
8 became aware of this report that you have about  
9 recommendations for enhancing reactor safety, which  
10 was done exactly in the wake of Fukushima, and I think  
11 that's very relevant.

12 So I was asking -- I don't know whether  
13 it's in here, because I haven't read almost 82 pages  
14 yet. How far in advance was the disaster at Fukushima  
15 predicted, approximately?

16 MR. MAIER: Is there anybody who feels  
17 qualified to answer that question?

18 (No response.)

19 MR. MAIER: Jan, we may have to ask you  
20 to put that on a blue card and get that back to us.

21 MS. HILLEGAS: Had the officials -- the  
22 technicians at the plant, Fukushima, prepared for what  
23 happened there, had they foreseen the possibility of  
24 what did happen there?

25 MR. WRONA: This is David Wrona with the

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1 NRC. As Nate presented in his slide, when the events  
2 of Fukushima happened, the NRC took immediate actions  
3 and did some inspections at all the plants.

4 And it's very important to the NRC, and  
5 we're continuing to follow up what happened there and  
6 what we can do -- if there's any things that we can do  
7 going forward: changes in our regulations, changes in  
8 how we inspect. And a lot of those are called out in  
9 that report that you had indicated.

10 And as Nate indicated, the agency hasn't  
11 found, to date, anything that has caused us to call  
12 into question the safety and operations of the power  
13 plants. It's an ongoing issue. The agency's  
14 continuing to look at that and plans to issue some  
15 orders and some demands for information of perhaps all  
16 the applicants by in the March time frame.

17 So there's more to follow on this. It is  
18 under the realm of our current operations and making  
19 sure the plants are safe today, and it will be  
20 implemented irregardless of the status of the license  
21 renewal for any of the plants, whether they have  
22 applied and they're currently under review, whether  
23 they already have a renewed license, or whether they  
24 plan to come in with an application in the new future  
25 or even in the distant future.

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1 MR. MAIER: Dave, this is Bill Maier.  
2 Let me just ask, is it prudent to say that any  
3 statements or any reports about what happened onsite  
4 at Fukushima by the staff -- whether the staff  
5 anticipated or not -- would be more appropriately  
6 dealt with in a report from the Japanese government  
7 rather than the NRC?

8 MR. WRONA: It would just be guessing at  
9 all the events and what they had known at the time,  
10 unless they had indicated to us in an official report.

11 And we do have some information -- the  
12 slide show had presented it and I think in the  
13 handout -- that is available. We have a website that  
14 could go into a lot more detail on the specifics that  
15 we are doing as a follow-up to the Fukushima event.

16 MR. MAIER: Maybe if we could pull that  
17 slide up again, folks could see what that website is.

18 (Pause.)

19 MR. MAIER: And it should also be in the  
20 handout that David provided. There at the bottom of  
21 that slide there, and it's on the back of the welcome  
22 sheet.

23 MS. HILLEGAS: Can any of you tell me how  
24 the standards of the Japanese equivalent of the NRC  
25 compare with the standards of the US NRC in relation

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1 to the various safety and emergency preparedness  
2 things that were relevant to Fukushima?

3 MR. MAIER: Anybody feel qualified to  
4 answer that question?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. MAIER: No.

7 MS. HILLEGAS: But you are the people who  
8 are in charge of figuring out whether Grand Gulf meets  
9 US standards.

10 I know everybody can't know everything,  
11 but even given that, it seems to me that it's very  
12 much within your job description to become familiar  
13 with how the standards compare and how the  
14 predictability of disasters figures into this and  
15 therefore the preparedness for the expected or the  
16 unexpected, all of those things.

17 That's why all of this is so important.

18 MR. MAIER: David, let me just say, would  
19 it be appropriate to talk briefly about the Japan  
20 Lessons Learned directorate that's just formed up in  
21 the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and talk in  
22 general terms about what their activities are designed  
23 to do?

24 MR. WRONA: Well, it is the NRC's mandate  
25 to ensure the public health and safety, and the agency

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1 takes that mission very seriously. The folks we have  
2 here are specifically to talk about license renewal,  
3 and we came to seek comments on specifically the  
4 environmental scoping.

5 There is a group within the agency that  
6 their whole task is to evaluate what has gone on in  
7 the Japan event, make recommendations to the  
8 Commission on how to move forward. The Commission is  
9 acting on those recommendations, and as the slide  
10 indicates, you know, we plan to take some actions and  
11 issue some orders in the March time frame.

12 And all I can add is that that  
13 information's available. We're not the experts on  
14 that particular area. We do have folks in the agency  
15 that that is their sole responsibility, and we can  
16 just point to the website, and that will give you as  
17 much information as you'd be interested in trying to  
18 find out on the Japan event.

19 MR. MAIER: Additional questions, Jan?

20 MS. HILLEGAS: Grand Gulf has been in  
21 operation about 27 years. Can someone tell me, in  
22 those 27 years, on at least about how many occasions  
23 or how many days was the level of the Mississippi  
24 River above flood stage? That's part one.

25 MR. MAIER: Rich followed that last

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1 spring. I don't know if anybody has kept those  
2 statistics and brought them here to this meeting, but  
3 I'll let Rich take a stab at it.

4 MR. SMITH: First of all, I want to just  
5 explain how the site is laid out. All right?

6 So the site is at 132-1/2 feet mean sea  
7 level, and the record anticipated flood is 103-1/2  
8 feet mean sea level, so there we have 29 feet of  
9 buffer. Okay?

10 The equipment that was affected by the  
11 flooding event, which didn't cause the plant to have  
12 to shut down or anything, is nonsafety-related cooling  
13 pumps down by the river.

14 If those pumps were lost, they're not  
15 counted on to keep the reactor cool during an event.  
16 So essentially a flooding event is not in the design  
17 base as an accident that is credible that could occur  
18 at Grand Gulf that would cause a core-damaging event.

19 But just like I was saying, these  
20 nonsafety-related pumps, if they were all lost, they  
21 have safety-related cooling, and they have a basin of  
22 15 million gallons of water for a 30-day supply to  
23 cool the reactor as part of their design.

24 And then at that point they think with  
25 the 30 days they'd be able to get more water onsite if

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1 they needed it.

2 So does that answer your question? As  
3 far as the number of days of flooding, I cannot answer  
4 specifically in the last 27 years how many, but  
5 they're never had a flooding event that has caused any  
6 detrimental operation to the plant.

7 I've been here for the two highest  
8 floods, in 2008, 53 feet. Last year I think it went  
9 57.1 feet. And both times the licensee has taken  
10 appropriate actions to ensure that their equipment is  
11 well protected; they're built up on platforms and  
12 things so that they can continue to operate, but they  
13 also have standards if the level got too high; they  
14 were going to shut the plant down in a safe,  
15 controlled manner, mainly because the cooling water to  
16 their nonsafety-related equipment could have been  
17 interrupted.

18 And we oversaw the whole thing, had frank  
19 discussions with the licensee what their plans are and  
20 things like that.

21 MS. HILLEGAS: When you said in 2008 that  
22 the level was -- did you mean 157.1?

23 MR. SMITH: It was 53 feet mean sea  
24 level -- it was 53 at Vicksburg. Okay? And it was  
25 57.1 feet at Vicksburg this year, past year. Now,

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1 that doesn't totally correspond to -- 57.1 feet  
2 reflected 94 feet at mean sea level; there's a  
3 correction factor as you come down river.

4 MS. HILLEGAS: Thank you.

5 MR. MAIER: Maybe we can go over the  
6 numbers after the meeting's over. Do you have  
7 additional questions that are related to license  
8 renewal?

9 MS. HILLEGAS: Well, you've given me  
10 numbers 132 and then 103.5, and now you're down to 53,  
11 so I am definitely confused, and maybe the transcript  
12 will clarify that for me, but it doesn't otherwise.

13 MR. MAIER: Let's take care of this after  
14 the meeting's over.

15 MS. HILLEGAS: Well, what -- the follow-  
16 up to understanding what has happened in the past 27  
17 years is to ask what was the historically highest  
18 level of the river, and then how many more feet would  
19 it have had to rise above what it has in 27 years or  
20 historically to cause a problem at the plant, and what  
21 kind of a problem would be caused by those additional  
22 feet.

23 I'm just trying to get a picture of the  
24 options.

25 MR. SMITH: Okay. First of all, I said

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1 that a flooding event at the plant is not a credible  
2 accident, so all I know is from the history of the  
3 Mississippi, 1927 was the highest flood stage, and  
4 that would not have affected the plant. I can't go  
5 and speculate how high it's going to get; I have no  
6 idea.

7 But I know that in 1957 -- 1927, when it  
8 probably would have rose higher than '57, they  
9 estimate 65 feet, it still would not have affected the  
10 core safety, because all the safety equipment is up on  
11 the 132-1/2 feet elevation at the plant site, and that  
12 would have kept the core cool. And they would have  
13 shut down, but the core would have been fine.

14 Does that answer your question?

15 MS. HILLEGAS: Okay. Are you saying that  
16 the significant, dangerous part of the plant is 132  
17 up, and the water hasn't gotten above 50 or 60?

18 MR. SMITH: To try to clarify, I use  
19 apples and oranges, and I apologize for that. At  
20 Vicksburg, where they measure the water for flood  
21 stage, that's the lower numbers -- 54, 57, things like  
22 that.

23 When it comes down the river you have to  
24 add a correction factor, and what they deal with is  
25 the 132-1/2 feet mean sea level. It's about, I don't

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1 know, 30 feet more that you would add on to -- 30, 40;  
2 I'm not exactly -- remember the exact number, but  
3 there is a correction factor from Vicksburg down to  
4 where the plant is.

5 And so what I'm saying is I think it was  
6 estimated with 65 feet at '27 flood. You had 40, 50  
7 to that, it's still not going to get to 132-1/2 feet  
8 mean sea level, so that's why flooding is not a  
9 credible accident at the Grand Gulf site.

10 MR. MAIER: I think, to ask clarification  
11 of these specific numbers, we may not have that  
12 information for you, so we'll have to entertain that  
13 at some other time. I see Debra has a question or a  
14 comment, and I'll ask Debra to respond, and please  
15 give your name and your affiliation.

16 MS. CHAMBLISS: I'm Debra Chambliss; I'm  
17 with the City of Port Gibson.

18 My question is, over the 27 years that  
19 Grand Gulf has been in operation, has there been any  
20 environmental or safety issues that the NRC has had to  
21 rectify at Grand Gulf?

22 MR. MAIER: Debra, I guess we'll need to  
23 get a little bit more focusing on that one. Is there  
24 something in mind that you wanted to ask --

25 MS. CHAMBLISS: I'm just asking if there

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1 has been any significant event at Grand Gulf that has  
2 been -- has the plant at noncompliance or anything  
3 where the NRC has had to come in and regulate  
4 anything, or is everything going pretty much as  
5 planned?

6 MR. MAIER: I'm going to let Rich take  
7 this one.

8 And, Debra, is it fair to say that your  
9 question is, are there problems that are identified by  
10 the NRC? Are those problems addressed by the NRC, and  
11 are those problems corrected such that plant operation  
12 is maintained safe? Is that a fair way to paraphrase  
13 it?

14 MR. SMITH: Yeah, our process is that  
15 we're conducting inspections daily at the plant, and  
16 sometimes during our inspections we find that they're  
17 not in compliance with the rules.

18 So the licensee has a corrective action  
19 program. They write a condition report identifying  
20 that, immediately implement either corrective  
21 actions, if they can, or compensatory actions to meet  
22 the standard.

23 We go through our process, and if it's a  
24 violation, we write the violation up, and then they're  
25 required to take correction action to prevent that

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1 type of violation from recurring again.

2 Now, as far as significant violations at  
3 the plant, I can only speak for the four years I've  
4 been there, and we have not had anything above what we  
5 call a white finding, which would be low to moderate  
6 safety concern.

7 Most of our findings are green, which are  
8 very low safety significance. There are violations of  
9 the rules, and they have to correct them, but they're  
10 not very significant.

11 None of them have screened where it would  
12 be a potential core-damaging event type thing. I'm  
13 only speaking of the four years. I can't go back the  
14 other 23, because I haven't been here. All right?  
15 Thank you.

16 MR. MAIER: Thank you.

17 Once again I'll cast a net, and I'll ask  
18 if anybody in the audience would like to provide any  
19 sort of comments for the NRC to consider in their  
20 review of the environmental impacts of the license  
21 renewal application for Grand Gulf.

22 If you'd like to raise your hand, we'd  
23 give you an opportunity to step up to the microphone  
24 and make that comment.

25 (No response.)

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1 MR. MAIER: Do you have additional  
2 questions that are related to license renewal?

3 MS. HILLEGAS: One of the things that's  
4 been mentioned is taking into account the fact that  
5 this is an aging plant, now a 27-year-old plant, and  
6 by the time the renewal would start, would be a 40-  
7 year-old plant and then becoming a 60-year-old plant.

8 Can someone give us a general idea of  
9 what percentage of the potential trouble spots in the  
10 plant, especially given an aging plant -- what  
11 approximate percentage of the potential trouble spots  
12 can be directly observed so they could be noted before  
13 something actually happens?

14 Are there signs of wear of one sort or  
15 another, or -- I don't know -- steam or -- you know,  
16 any indications like visible indications that would be  
17 warnings that something was going wrong? And then  
18 what kind -- given that aging is recognized as a  
19 legitimate problem and fact, what kinds of potential  
20 problems does the NRC -- do you all realize could be  
21 the ones that are most likely to happen?

22 MR. FERRER: I can't speak necessarily to  
23 a specific percentage of issues. I can kind of speak  
24 about what the license renewal process accomplishes,  
25 and that's to ensure that applicants put several

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1 programs in place to specifically look for the types  
2 of things that you're talking about, the aging  
3 components.

4 And the programs may have them look at  
5 things more often, do more inspections, look at  
6 additional items to make sure that things continue to  
7 operate safely.

8 MR. MAIER: Nate, I'm going to follow up  
9 with maybe you would want to talk a little bit about  
10 what the tools the licensee has for conducting this  
11 aging management, for evaluating these passive  
12 components. How would they do it if they can't  
13 visually see it? What sort of schedule of inspections  
14 they're on and how do they do this? In general terms,  
15 not real specific.

16 MR. FERRER: Well, we have -- the  
17 programs themselves may implement additional, like we  
18 talked about, inspections; there's also testing of the  
19 components. And in some cases, if they find  
20 something, they may be required to replace those  
21 components.

22 MR. MAIER: But things like -- would  
23 there be things like X-rays, radiography, ultrasonic  
24 testing?

25 MR. FERRER: Yeah, that's part of the --

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1 yeah, there's several ways that they can observe or  
2 inspect or test a component, several technologies that  
3 they have at their disposal to look for those things.

4 MR. SMITH: I think, to address your  
5 question, they have -- all licensees are required to  
6 have a flow acceleration corrosion program, which  
7 basically they go through and sample all the steam and  
8 water piping that are exposed to high pressures for  
9 erosion, corrosion issues on the piping systems, and  
10 they have it all computerized and mapped out.

11 And they normally use what they call  
12 ultrasonic testing to see the thinness of the pipes,  
13 and when they reach a certain thinness, then they're  
14 required to cut those pipes out, replace them with new  
15 pipes, and that's all part of the process right now.  
16 Even if they weren't doing license renewal, they'd be  
17 doing this, and they do do this, and so that has  
18 proven to be very successful in heading off potential  
19 issues, and all plants do this.

20 So I think that kind of answers some --  
21 no, you can't just walk up to a pipe and say, Hmm, it  
22 looks like it's getting ready to fail. Normally when  
23 they're shut down they go ahead and have scheduled  
24 areas that they're known, such as elbows and things  
25 like that are known to have high flow rates, potential

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1 corrosion areas, and then so they will check a certain  
2 percentage each outage, to ensure that everything's  
3 okay, and if it's not, they take appropriate actions  
4 to fix it.

5 MR. MAIER: And this is all part of aging  
6 management? A horse by any other name.

7 MS. HILLEGAS: One other part of this  
8 same subject. What is the longest number of years  
9 that, well, an exactly or similarly designed plant has  
10 run successfully? -- some other plants?

11 What I'm getting at is, has any plant run  
12 40 years or 60 years yet?

13 MR. WRONA: Yeah, there are, I think by  
14 the end of this year, approximately five to nine  
15 plants that are going to be operating past their 40-  
16 year period. Most of them are in the 40- to 43-year  
17 period, I believe.

18 MS. HILLEGAS: Okay. I want to ask about  
19 something that I read about in a news release that  
20 came out just a week ago.

21 The NRC found an error in the modeling of  
22 a design that relates to the steam dryer part of the  
23 boiling water reactors such as Grand Gulf has. It was  
24 discovered when -- by the NRC staff when it was  
25 reviewing this application by Entergy -- I'm sorry --

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1 no, I guess not. Excuse me.

2           Actually, now that I see what this says,  
3 it adds another question. The error in the design of  
4 this component was found when they were reviewing an  
5 application by Entergy to increase the power output of  
6 the Grand Gulf nuclear plant, is what this release  
7 says.

8           So the additional question is, when did  
9 we hear about that -- any such application, and was  
10 the public comment and review and any of that about  
11 the increase of output?

12           But then the question about the steam  
13 dryer component -- this is a GE Hitachi product, which  
14 presumably had been reviewed by Entergy people before  
15 they decided they wanted to put it in Grand Gulf.

16           What if the NRC had missed the same  
17 things that GE people and Grand Gulf people had  
18 already missed?

19           MR. MAIER: I don't know that NRC people  
20 are ready to speculate on that, but we do have another  
21 division that's reviewing this particular thing as  
22 part of the operating license. Is that true? And  
23 those would be the folks who'd be most qualified to  
24 talk about that. Maybe that would be another blue  
25 card question to put on a blue card and get a response

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1 from the people that would know best how to answer.

2 But we have someone who's going to talk.

3 MR. WRONA: No, I'd just like to put in a  
4 plug for our listserv. Either on the signup sheet or  
5 the -- one of the blue cards, if you provide us with  
6 an email address, you'll be added to an electronic  
7 distribution, and all the communications between the  
8 NRC and the licensee, or applicant, in the case of  
9 license renewal, will come to you in that email, and  
10 that would include license amendment requests, which  
11 the power-up rate is; any requests for additional  
12 information that the NRC has of the applicant, the  
13 responses back and forth any notices associated with  
14 that license amendment would come right to your email.

15 MR. MAIER: And that's at [www.nrc.gov](http://www.nrc.gov)?

16 MR. WRONA: Well, all that stuff's  
17 publicly available on our ADAMS system.

18 MR. MAIER: To get on to the listserv.

19 MR. WRONA: But if she gives us -- if you  
20 give us your email address, we'll put you on the  
21 listserv.

22 MS. HILLEGAS: All right.

23 MR. MAIER: Yeah, we'll get you on there.

24 We're almost out of time.

25 MS. HILLEGAS: Well, is there an answer

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1 about why -- was there some process that I missed to  
2 increase the capacity, or did that -- as far as I  
3 know, it just appeared in the newspaper it was going  
4 to happen, even though there had been a process that I  
5 attended some years ago about the proposed Grand Gulf  
6 3, which did not happen, but then all of a sudden that  
7 wasn't there anymore and there was the increase of  
8 capacity.

9 MR. WRONA: It would have been a license  
10 amendment request, and those are noticed in the  
11 Federal Register notice. I don't know the date that  
12 that came in, but again we can get you the information  
13 on when the initial application was submitted to the  
14 NRC for review.

15 MR. MAIER: We're almost out of time.

16 MS. HILLEGAS: Can anyone tell me  
17 anything about the role of the Southern Mississippi --  
18 or South Mississippi Electric Power Association in  
19 relation to this community that's based in  
20 Hattiesburg, and I believe it has 10 percent ownership  
21 in the plant?

22 MR. MAIER: Do you have a specific  
23 question that you want answered?

24 MS. HILLEGAS: The role of the South  
25 Mississippi Electric Power Association. Maybe nobody

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1 knows that.

2 MR. MAIER: I don't think the NRC  
3 folks -- oh, wait a minute.

4 MR. SMITH: Yeah, the SMEPA, as they're  
5 referred to, they have a 10-percent ownership of the  
6 plant, and so they pay 10 percent of the bills and  
7 things like that, and then they get power from the  
8 plant, and that's kind of the role how it is; it's  
9 called minority owner.

10 They do have one representative on staff  
11 down there that's independent that just follows along  
12 the processes and asks questions and -- to protect  
13 their interest and things like that; make sure  
14 everything's running well and understands what's going  
15 on, be able to explain it to his immediate superiors.

16 That's it. They don't run the plant.  
17 Entergy runs the plant. They're just a minority  
18 owner, and they pay 10 percent of all the bills and  
19 then they get the power in return to help supply that  
20 to the public.

21 MS. HILLEGAS: Can someone tell me the  
22 approximate annual budget of the NRC?

23 MR. MAIER: Come on; get up there.

24 MR. WRONA: If I'm remembering  
25 correctly -- and this is all publicly available on our

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1 website, but I think the NRC's total operating budget  
2 is approximately \$1 billion.

3 MR. MAIER: That's billion with a B.  
4 Correct?

5 MR. WRONA: Correct.

6 MS. HILLEGAS: And the approximate cost  
7 of a license renewal and environmental scoping process  
8 like we're in?

9 MR. MAIER: It's a good question; I like  
10 that question.

11 MR. WRONA: It's -- the cost of the  
12 applicant to produce and send in is outside of our  
13 purview, so I can't speak to that. It's -- it depends  
14 on the length of the review. All the hours that the  
15 staff and the contractors perform on our license  
16 renewal review are billed to the applicant, and if --  
17 it's in, I believe, the \$5 million range, you know,  
18 depending on how -- and it's hard to convert how we  
19 measure resources by staff utilization to a specific  
20 dollar amount.

21 MS. HILLEGAS: So that 5 million is part  
22 of the billion or in addition to?

23 MR. WRONA: I have to explain a little  
24 bit how we -- we do charge licensees annual fees, and  
25 we also bill them for the reviews that we conduct, but

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1 the funding goes to the government's general fund, and  
2 we have to request our budget from Congress annually.  
3 So the \$1 billion is what we get from Congress.

4 MR. MAIER: Isn't it theoretically safe  
5 to say that that's part of the 1 billion, because the  
6 1 billion is what the NRC gets?

7 MR. WRONA: Yeah, typically we base our  
8 request on the work that we plan on performing.

9 MR. MAIER: Okay. Well, we've come to  
10 the end of the scheduled meeting here. I guess I  
11 would urge if anybody does have additional questions  
12 that they'd like to discuss with the NRC folks, they  
13 can ask it after we finish the meeting here. Some NRC  
14 folks will be staying around to be able to answer some  
15 questions.

16 If questions were asked that were not  
17 able to be answered, filling out a blue card with the  
18 question on the back and maybe the words "question on  
19 back" on the front with your contact information will  
20 get you -- get that card back to whoever is most  
21 appropriately qualified to answer that question.

22 And I will also urge folks to fill out  
23 the feedback forms, get the feedback forms to one of  
24 the NRC folks. And if you don't have time or you  
25 don't want to fill it out tonight, mail it in.

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1           We have had a pretty full meeting, and  
2 I'm sorry to say we didn't get any comments for the  
3 NRC to address, but that's the way it goes sometimes.

4           Many thanks are in order. Thanks to  
5 Mayor Reeves for providing a very comfortable setting  
6 for us to have this meeting. Thank Deputies Claiborne  
7 and Smith for your service; you sat through both of  
8 these meetings.

9           And I thank you for coming. I thank you  
10 for showing an interest in it, and also thanks to Bob  
11 Smylie and Penny Bynum for capturing all the comments  
12 and the questions and verbiage for including in the  
13 transcript.

14           I don't think that we have any more  
15 things that we need to talk about, just that the NRC  
16 folks will be available, that this meeting will be  
17 documented in a meeting summary that will be put out  
18 on that list service that we talked about, or  
19 available to folks who fill out a blue card and ask  
20 for that information to be sent to them.

21           Is there anything else that any of the  
22 NRC folks would like to say?

23           (No response.)

24           MR. MAIER: Okay. Well, thank you very  
25 much for coming, and I hope that it was an informative

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1 experience for you.

2 (Whereupon, at 8:30 p.m., the public  
3 meeting was concluded.)

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