

August 23, 2000

Lewis Sumner, Vice President  
Hatch Project Support  
Southern Nuclear Operating Company  
40 Inverness Parkway  
Post Office Box 1295  
Birmingham, AL 35201

SUBJECT: ISSUANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE STAFF'S REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION BY  
SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY FOR RENEWAL OF THE  
OPERATING LICENCES FOR THE EDWIN I. HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT,  
UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. MA8330 AND MA8332)

Dear Mr. Sumner:

From April 12 through June 9, 2000, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conducted a scoping process to determine the scope of the NRC staff's environmental review of the application for renewal of the operating licenses for the Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2 (Plant Hatch), submitted by Southern Nuclear Operating Company by letter dated February 29, 2000. As part of the scoping process, the NRC staff held two public environmental scoping meetings in Vidalia, Georgia, on May 10, 2000, to solicit public input regarding the scope of the review. The scoping process is the first step in the development of a plant-specific supplement to NUREG-1437, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants (GEIS)," for Plant Hatch.

The NRC staff has prepared the enclosed environmental scoping summary report identifying comments received at the May 10, 2000, license renewal environmental scoping meetings, and in writing during the comment period. In accordance with 10 CFR 51.29(b), you are being provided a copy of the scoping summary report. The transcripts of the meetings can be found at the NRC Internet website at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/REACTOR/LR/HATCH/docs.html>, and as an attachment to the June 8, 2000, meeting summary. The comment letters and e-mail are available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room) (Note that the URLs are case-sensitive).

L. Sumner

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The next step in the environmental review process is the issuance of a draft supplement to the GEIS scheduled for January 2001. Notice of the availability of the draft supplement to the GEIS and the procedures for providing comments will be published in an upcoming *Federal Register* notice. If you have any questions concerning this matter, you can call me at (301) 415-1108.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

James H. Wilson, Senior Project Manager  
Generic Issues, Environmental, Financial, and  
Rulemaking Branch  
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-321 and 50-366

Enclosure: As stated

cc w/encl: see next page

L. Sumner

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**Environmental Impact Statement  
Scoping Process**

**Summary Report**

**Hatch Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2  
Baxley County, Georgia**

**August 2000**



**U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Rockville, Maryland**

## Introduction

On March 1, 2000, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) received an application dated February 29, 2000, for renewal of the operating licenses of Hatch Nuclear Station (HNS), Units 1 and 2. The HNS units are located in Baxley County, Georgia. As part of the application, Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC), the applicant, submitted an environmental report (ER) prepared in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 51. 10 CFR Part 51 contains the NRC requirements for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the implementing regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Section 51.53 outlines requirements for preparation and submittal of environmental reports to the NRC.

Section 51.53(c)(3) was based upon the findings documented in NUREG-1437, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants," (GEIS). The GEIS, in which the staff identified and evaluated the environmental impacts associated with license renewal, was issued for public comment. The staff received input from Federal and State agencies, public organizations, and private citizens. As a result of the assessments in the GEIS, a number of impacts were determined to be generic to all nuclear power plants. These were designated as Category 1 impacts. An applicant for license renewal may adopt the conclusions contained in the GEIS for Category 1 impacts, absent new and significant information that may cause the conclusions to fall outside those of the GEIS. Category 2 impacts are those impacts that have been determined to be plant-specific and are required to be addressed in the applicant's ER. The Commission determined that the NRC does not have a role in energy planning decision-making for existing plants, which should be left to State regulators and utility officials. Therefore, an applicant for license renewal need not provide an analysis of the need for power, or the economic costs and economic benefits of the proposed action. Additionally, the Commission determined that the ER need not discuss any aspect of storage of spent fuel for the facility. This determination was based on the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 and the Commission's Waste Confidence Rule, 10 CFR 51.23.

On April 12, 2000, the NRC published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register (65 FR 19797), to notify the public of the staff's intent to prepare a plant-specific supplement to the GEIS to support the renewal application for the HNS operating licenses. The plant-specific supplement to the GEIS will be prepared in accordance with NEPA, CEQ guidelines, and 10 CFR Part 51. As outlined by NEPA, the NRC initiated the scoping process with the issuance of the Federal Register Notice. The NRC invited the applicant; Federal, State, and local government agencies; local organizations; and individuals to participate in the scoping process by providing oral comments at the scheduled public meetings and/or submitting written suggestions and comments no later than June 9, 2000. The scoping process included two public scoping meetings, which were held at the Southeastern Technical Institute in Vidalia, Georgia on May 10, 2000. The NRC announced the meetings in local newspapers (Baxley News Banner, Savannah Morning News, The Macon Telegraph, The Advanced Progress, and Atlanta Journal Constitution), issued press releases, and distributed flyers locally. Approximately 50 members of the public attended the meetings. Both sessions began with NRC staff members providing a brief overview of the license renewal process and the NEPA process. Following the NRC's prepared statements, the meetings were open for public comments. Twenty-three attendees provided either oral comments or written statements that were recorded and transcribed by a certified court reporter. The meeting transcripts are available on the NRC Internet website at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/REACTOR/LR/HATCH/docs.html>. In addition to the comments provided during the public meetings, nine comment letters and three e-mail messages were received by the NRC in response to the Notice of Intent. The meeting summary, comment letters, and e-mail are available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

The scoping process provides an opportunity for public participation to identify issues to be addressed in the plant-specific supplement to the GEIS and highlight public concerns and issues. The Notice of Intent identified the following objectives of the scoping process:

- Define the proposed action
- Determine the scope of the supplement to the GEIS and identify significant issues to be analyzed in depth
- Identify and eliminate peripheral issues
- Identify any environmental assessments and other environmental impact statements being prepared that are related to the supplement to the GEIS
- Identify other environmental review and consultation requirements
- Indicate the schedule for preparation of the supplement to the GEIS
- Identify any cooperating agencies
- Describe how the supplement to the GEIS will be prepared.

At the conclusion of the scoping period, the NRC staff and its contractor reviewed the transcripts and all written material received, and identified individual comments. All comments and suggestions received orally during the scoping meetings or in writing were considered. Each commenter was given a unique identifier (commenter number) such that it could be traced back to the transcripts or written comments. Table 1 identifies the individual providing the comment. The individuals are listed in the order in which they spoke at the meetings or provided written comments. The accession number is provided for the written comments to facilitate access to the document through the Public Electronic Reading Room (ADAMS). Comments were then consolidated and categorized according to the topic within the proposed supplement to the GEIS or according to the general topic if outside the scope of the GEIS. Comments with similar specific objectives were combined to capture the common essential issues that had been raised in the source comments. Once comments were grouped according to subject area, the staff and contractor determined the appropriate action for the comment. The staff made a determination on each comment that it was one of the following:

- a comment that was actually a request for information and introduces no new information.

- a comment that was either related to support or opposition of license renewal in general (or specifically, HNS) or that makes a general statement about the licensing renewal process. It may make only a general statement regarding Category 1 and/or Category 2 issues. In addition, it provides no new information and does not pertain to 10 CFR Part 54.
- a comment about a Category 1 issue that
  - provided new information that required evaluation during the review, or
  - provided no new information
- a comment about a Category 2 issue that
  - provided information that required evaluation during the review, or
  - provided no such information
- a comment that raised an environmental issue that was not addressed in the GEIS
- a comment on safety issues pertaining to 10 CFR Part 54, or
- a comment outside the scope of license renewal (not related to 10 CFR Parts 51 or 54).

Each comment is summarized in the following pages. For reference, after the comment, the unique identifier (commenter number listed in Table 1) for the individual is provided in parentheses. In those cases where no new information was provided by the commenter, no further evaluation will be performed.

The preparation of the plant-specific supplement to the GEIS (which is the SEIS) will take into account all the relevant issues raised during the scoping process. The SEIS will address both Category 1 and 2 issues, along with any new information identified as a result of scoping. The SEIS will rely on conclusions supported by information in the GEIS for Category 1 issues, and will include the analysis of Category 2 issues and any new and significant information. The draft plant-specific supplement to the GEIS will be available for public comment. The comment period will offer the next opportunity for the applicant, interested Federal, State, and local government agencies; local organizations; and members of the public to provide input to the NRC's environmental review process. The comments received on the draft SEIS will be considered in the preparation of the final SEIS. The final SEIS, along with the staff's Safety Evaluation Report (SER), will provide the basis for the NRC's decision on the HNS license renewal.

**TABLE 1 - Individuals Providing Comments During Scoping Comment Period**

<b>Commenter Number</b>	<b>Commenter's Name</b>	<b>Commenter's Affiliation (If Stated)</b>
Afternoon Session of Public Scoping Meeting (Accession #ML003722540)		
1	Janisse Ray	Resident, Baxley
2	Deborah Sheppard	Exec. Director, Altamaha Riverkeeper org.
3	Rita Kilpatrick – spoke at both sessions	Executive Director, Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia
4	Lewis Sumner – spoke at both sessions	SNC, Vice President of Hatch Project
5	Byron Fiemster – spoke at both sessions	SNC, Hatch Environmental Specialist
6	Cathy Mehan	President, Southern Technical Institute, Vidalia
7	Dane Bruce (statement read)	Director, Appling County Emergency Management Agency
8	Pamela Blockey-O'Brien – spoke at both sessions and provided a written statement	On behalf of National and International Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR/IFOR)
9	Duane Whitley	Chairman, Appling County Commission
10	Roger Byrd	State House Industry Committee
11	Lewis Parker	Sheriff, Appling County
12	Tim Smith	Superintendent, Vidalia City Schools
13	Gary Drury	Georgia Coast Watch, St. Simons Island
14	Eddie Tyson	Resident, Vidalia
15	Steve Rigdon	Mayor of Baxley
16	Ralph Beedle – spoke at both afternoon and evening sessions	Sr. Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer, Nuclear Energy Institute, Washington, D.C.
17	Karen Durden	President, Toombs-Montgomery-Wheeler County United Way
18	Phil Proctor	Engineer, Nuclear Electrical Energy Corporation
19	George Dickens	Executive Director, Development Authority of Jeff Davis County

<b>Commenter Number</b>	<b>Commenter's Name</b>	<b>Commenter's Affiliation (If Stated)</b>
Evening Session of Public Scoping Meeting (Accession #ML003722540)		
20	Dale Adkins	Director, Appling County Development
21	Mike Cleland	County Manager, Appling County
22	Jeff Baxley	City Manager, Baxley
23	Ross Kitts	Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia
Letters and E-Mail Messages Received During Comment Period		
24	Jeffrey P. Baxley (dated April 28, 2000) Accession #ML003711952	City Manager, Baxley
25	Cathryn T. Meehan (dated May 1, 2000) Accession #ML003713015	President, Southeastern Technical Institute
26	J. Edward Tyson (dated May 8, 2000) Accession #ML003717837	President, Darby Bank & Trust Company
27	Bill Mitchell (dated May 26, 2000) Accession #ML003734958	President, Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce
28	Pamela Blockey-O'Brien (dated May 29, 2000) Accession #ML003721382	FOR/IFOR (see #8 above)
29	Tommie Williams (dated May 30, 2000) Accession #ML003721062	Georgia State Senator, District 6
30	Pamela Blockey-O'Brien (dated June 4, 2000) Accession #ML003722562	See 8 and 28 above
31	Dusty Gres (dated June 5, 2000) Accession #ML003722922	Resident, Appling County
32	Pamela Blockey-O'Brien (dated June 7, 2000) Accession #ML003725750	See 8, 28, and 30 above
33	Greg Morris (dated June 8, 2000) Accession #ML003724837	Georgia State House of Representatives
34	Deborah Sheppard (dated June 9, 2000) Accession #ML003725755	Executive Director, Altamaha Riverkeeper organization

<b>Commenter Number</b>	<b>Commenter's Name</b>	<b>Commenter's Affiliation (If Stated)</b>
35	Rita Kilpatrick (dated June 9, 2000) Accession #ML003725758 and ML003734958	Executive Director, Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia

**Hatch Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2  
Public Scoping Meeting and Written Input  
Comments and Responses**

The following pages summarize the comments and suggestions received as part of the scoping process, and discuss their disposition. The unique identifier (commenter number listed in Table 1) for the individual who provided the oral or written comment is in parentheses after the comment. General comments are listed first; then comments related to specified issues are listed.

**General Statements and Comments in Support of License Renewal**

**Comment:** The nuclear industry has improved over the years and has learned to operate them more efficiently and safely than ever before. License renewal offers three major benefits to our nation. First, it permits the United States to maintain economic electric generating capacity that is relatively free of greenhouse gases or other atmospheric pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and other particulates. Second, license renewal will preserve good jobs for Americans and continue improving the quality of life for the communities where these plants are located. And third, the renewal of a nuclear power plant's license is far more economical form of supplying electricity than building new generating capacity. (16)

**Comment:** For purposes of fuel diversity, long-term planning is critical, and nuclear is a key resource in fuel diversity. (18)

**Comment:** As long as these plants are safe to operate and economically viable, it is in the best interest of all people that they should continue to operate. (19)

**Response:** *These comments are noted. The comments are supportive of license renewal in general and make only general statements. They provide no new information and do not pertain to 10 CFR Part 54. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

**General Statements and Comments in Opposition to License Renewal**

**Comment:** The need for energy should be considered as an environmental concern given that the choice of technology has a very direct, significant impact on the local immediate and regional area. (3)

**Comment:** The NRC frequently categorizes problems as generic industry problems that should be considered site-specific problems. (3)

**Comment:** Low funding in the license renewal process is not enough to pay for a relicensing review or adequate analysis of the water contamination issue. (3)

**Comment:** The corporate mentality perpetuates a plant like Plant Hatch and the people have no recourse. (13)

**Response:** *These comments make general statements in opposition to the license renewal process and provide no new information. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

### **Statements in Support of License Renewal for the Hatch Nuclear Station**

**Comment :** The renewal of the Hatch license is the best long-term solution not just for the local community but throughout the State and country. (4)

**Comment:** Over the years, Plant Hatch has demonstrated high levels of safety and reliability and serves as an economical source of electric generation for the people of Georgia. Plant Hatch is projected to be a cost-effective supplier of electricity for many years to come. (4)

**Comment:** The extraordinary commitment of the employees has made Hatch one of the most reliable and efficient nuclear plants in the industry. (4)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch creates safe, emissions-free energy, while providing jobs, preserving the environment, and helping develop community projects. (6)

**Comment:** NRC and the plant operating companies take their responsibilities very seriously and have been very responsive with information about plant activities. (9)

**Comment:** The whole Appling County Commission supports relicensing. (9)

**Comment:** As part of maintaining public support in the area over the years, Georgia Power is open and available to provide information about their activities. (10)

**Comment:** There is no alternative energy generation option available now to satisfy the energy needs of the million new Georgians over the next decade. (10)

**Comment:** Relicensing Plant Hatch is a good decision, not only for business and for the economy, but for the environment. (10)

**Comment:** Service and leadership to the community provided by Plant Hatch have resulted in a healthy respect and allegiance toward the organization and the employees. (12)

**Comment:** Jeff Davis County has been impacted positively by Plant Hatch, and the track record of the plant operation has been excellent. (19)

**Comment:** It would be a tragedy and economic travesty to shut down a facility like this without proof that it was causing a problem. (19)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch informs [Appling County] of incidents and violations and measures to correct them. (21)

**Comment:** The people who work at Plant Hatch can be trusted to comply with NRC regulations. The NRC can successfully regulate Reactors 1 and 2 to continue their operation for another 20 years. (22)

**Comment:** The employees of SNC and Georgia Power can be trusted to be good stewards of [the Hatch] environment and to do everything possible for our community to be a safe one while efficiently generating energy for our surrounding communities and the State of Georgia. (22)

**Comment:** The Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG) is a 17.1 percent co-owner of Plant Hatch and supports the relicensing effort. (23)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is one of the most economical power production facilities that the MEAG has. (23)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is an environmentally friendly source of electricity that is vital to the continued economic prosperity of our state. (26)

**Response:** *These comments are noted. The comments are supportive of license renewal at the Hatch Plant Units 1 & 2. They provide no new information and do not pertain to 10 CFR Part 54. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

### **Statements in Opposition to License Renewal for the Hatch Nuclear Station**

**Comment:** One of the commenters strongly condemned nuclear energy and offered a variety of concerns. These were reviewed for relevance for license renewal. Additionally, this commenter (8, 28) requested the permanent shutdown of Hatch Units 1 and 2 and permanent license revocation. The points addressed in verbal and written statements include these general categories as well as issues listed in several specific categories:

- The plant lacks a containment dome and has known drywell leakage. (8)
- Most background radiation at the plant is coming from the nuclear facilities themselves. (8)
- The plant has a past history of spills and contamination incidents showing a pattern of serious problems and events that will recur or become worse due to plant aging. (8, 28)

- The Hatch plant's meteorological risk assessments of the region's history of severe weather (flooding) and downwind emissions are inadequate. (28)
- It is imperative for NRC to use longitudinal and detailed information, e.g., inspection reports, in considering relicensing. (8, 28)
- The proximity of the Hatch plant to agricultural areas, prisons, and schools threatens [the health of] local residents. (28)
- Water and vegetation quality in the Altamaha River and aquifers adjacent to the plant including withdrawals from the river are threatened by the effects of plant discharges on the confined aquifer of the Hawthorn Formation. (8)
- Unrealistically low upper dose levels are calculated from accidents in the plant offsite doses calculation manual and in the final Safety Analysis Report. (30)

**Comment:** Past practice of dumping radioactively contaminated sludge on the land for many years is a contamination clean-up issue. (3)

**Comment:** People on the coast are scared to death of Plant Hatch. (13)

**Comment:** People in the region aren't getting the true picture of the extent of the contamination in the Altamaha River system. (13)

**Comment:** Although it has been said that there are no air emissions, there are emissions, and they need to be evaluated as part of the relicensing process. (3)

**Comment:** The Altamaha Riverkeeper's Board of Directors opposes the effort to re-license the plant. (34)

**Response:** *None of the comments were determined to be relevant to license renewal. Comments questioning current plant operations have been referred to the licensing operations branch to determine whether any issues presented require further NRC evaluation.*

### **Comments Concerning Ecology**

**Comment:** I am proud of our work at Plant Hatch, including wide applications of land management, to preserve and protect the environment. (4)

**Comment:** The review of monitoring data around the generating facilities shows that Plant Hatch is a good steward of this vital resource and has no significant impact on the Altamaha. (5)

**Comment:** A detailed field survey to identify any threatened or endangered species and potential habitats was developed listing State and Federally listed species known to occur on the site and transmission line corridors bordering the Altamaha River. Extended operation will add no adverse impacts to threatened or endangered species at or near Plant Hatch. (5)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch's 26 years of operation has not adversely affected the air quality. Its use prevents 11 million metric tons a year of carbon dioxide [potentially released by other types of large-scale power generation]. (5)

**Response:** *The comments are noted. They summarize the applicant's review of ecological issues, as documented in their license renewal application. The comments provide no new information and therefore will not be evaluated further.*

**Comment:** Plant Hatch personnel are doing the very best to ensure that the Altamaha River is the kind of place where we can [safely] take our children and grandchildren. (10)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch and the government are monitoring [for releases of radioactive materials]. (11)

**Comment:** The Altamaha River looks much better than it did 30 years ago, and the fishing is as good or better. (21)

**Comment:** When you compare Plant Hatch with any other thermal generating facility and compare emissions such as oxidized carbon, nitrogen, and sulfur, it is what it does not emit that is important. Plant Hatch is really an environmentally friendly operation. (23)

**Comment:** Their policies in relation to the care of the natural environment have been pleasingly impressive. (31)

**Response:** *The comments are noted. They provide no new information and do not pertain to 10 CFR Part 54. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

**Comment:** It appears that we lack a true understanding of the impact of the operation of Plant Hatch on workers, the surrounding area and especially on downstream fish, mollusks, arthropods, and other critters living in the water and feeding on the sediments and nutrients in the water column. (34)

**Comment:** Hatch's aging reactors, spent fuel pool, and proposed Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation pose unacceptable risks to people, agriculture, and fishing in the surrounding area. (35)

**Response:** *The Supplement to the GEIS will include a review of the ecological aspects for issues pertinent to license renewal. Comments relevant to current operations will be referred to the licensing operations branch to determine whether any issues presented require further NRC evaluation.*

### **Comments Concerning Human Health Effects**

**Comment:** The Plant Hatch employees would not continue their employment if they felt it was a threat to their health or their family's health. (15)

**Response:** *The comment is noted. It provides no new information and does not pertain to 10 CFR Part 54. Therefore, it will not be evaluated further.*

**Comment:** Will the study include the radiological impacts to the public from river contamination? (1)

**Comment:** Epidemiological studies should be done for areas surrounding the Hatch plant. (1)

**Comment:** Are you aware of independent evaluations to assess current offsite radiological effects of Plant Hatch? And do you know how far Plant Hatch monitoring ranges geographically? Is there a systematic analysis of downstream effects beyond the 10-mile radius of the plant? (2)

**Comment:** Radiological studies should be conducted more extensively through the watershed. (2)

**Comment:** Radiological studies of the Altamaha River system should be conducted by independent investigators with no industry or government ties. (32)

**Comment:** It takes time for health problems to really reveal themselves and it is with ensuing generations where problems are likely to arise. (3)

**Comment:** Radiation from spent fuel storage casks will add to the already existing contamination levels above the routine releases to water and air. (3)

**Comment:** Human health is threatened from exposure to radioactivity from the plant and its nuclear waste. (8)

**Comment:** Referring to information from other sources, ionizing radiation has shown evidence of being a mutagen of unique potency. Some people believe that there is no safe dose of radiation. (8)

**Comment:** The plant's proximity to the river and its potential for continued routine release of radiation and other man-made pollutants into the river and its drainage area create anxiety and concern. (32, 34)

**Response:** *The NRC requires the utility to routinely conduct radiological monitoring of all plant effluents, and of surface and groundwater, food supplies, and dairy cattle within a 10-mile radius of the plant. The NRC also communicates with permitting agencies who administer the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, State radiological agencies, Fish and Wildlife Services, and other organizations. The radioactive emissions are consistently very low. [Note that radiation emissions from the shipping casks do not significantly contribute radioactivity to the environment.] Radiation exposure to the public and workers was evaluated in the GEIS and determined to be a Category 1 issue. No new information was provided by the comments. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

### **Comments Concerning Socioeconomics**

**Comment:** Plant Hatch employees are taking the lead in making their communities better places to live, giving generously of their time and resources. (4)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is an important part of the local economy with a large payroll and contribution to local and State taxes. (4)

**Comment:** The surrounding communities have greatly benefitted economically and in quality of life from the resources associated with Plant Hatch. (6)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has been an integral part of the economy of Appling County and the surrounding area since its construction, providing jobs and supporting economic growth in this region. (7)

**Comment:** Georgia Power (SNC) is very cooperative within the community, paying taxes and providing high tech jobs. (9)

**Comment:** The loss of the Hatch plant would adversely impact the economy, a societal environmental impact and an educational impact. (11)

**Comment:** I can attest to the extensive role that Plant Hatch has played in the economic growth of Toombs and surrounding counties. Plant Hatch employees are dedicated to making our community a better place to live. (14, 26)

**Comment:** If there is so much to be afraid of from Plant Hatch, why have well-educated, retired employees chosen to live here? (14)

**Comment:** The loss of Plant Hatch would be devastating to Baxley and Appling Counties and all of South Georgia if it is not relicensed. (15)

**Comment:** I believe it is a good, safe, viable industry that continues to be a good neighbor. (15)

**Comment:** We are fortunate to have the United Way volunteer and financial assistance of Plant Hatch employees. (17)

**Comment:** The quality of leadership by plant employees has given direction to the local communities in civil and political arenas. (20)

**Comment:** The existence of the local trained labor force helps in recruiting industry to the area. (20)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has made a tremendous impact on the local job structure, providing jobs for our people. (21)

**Comment:** Contributions to tax rolls reduces tax burden of individual property owners, and allows Appling county to maintain one of the lowest millage rates in the State. (21)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch surely contributes more to Appling county than any other local industry or business. (21)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has been a good neighbor, touching area citizens through [contributions to] recreation, civic, hospital, safety, and in many other ways. (21)

**Comment:** If Plant Hatch were ever too close, it would have a devastating impact on Appling County. (21)

**Comment:** As one of the largest employers in Appling County, Plant Hatch has been a vital part of the economy, providing excellent jobs and economic growth to the City of Baxley and Appling County. Over 60% of the *ad valorem* taxes paid in Appling County come from Plant Hatch. Refueling outages positively impact sales tax revenues. (24)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is a good neighbor, and its employees are very community minded, active in local civic organizations. (24)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has served the community well and their management team and staff continue to be very active in local charities and many organizations. Plant Hatch is the largest contributor to the local United Way agency. (25)

**Comment:** The economic impacts of the Hatch plant make up for 1000 jobs recently lost in the region. (27)

**Comment:** Southern Nuclear and Georgia Power are excellent "Good Neighbors." (27)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has been an integral part of the economy and is an important component of economic growth. (29)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has been a good neighbor, an integral part of the Toombs County economy, and is an important component in recent economic growth. Plant staff keep the State informed of plant status and activities. Extending the license would be favorably viewed by the State Representative's Office and the Vidalia community. (33)

**Response:** *The comments are noted. The comments provided no new information and, therefore, will not be evaluated further.*

**Comment:** The plant is located in South Georgia because we are poor, isolated, and we are a forgotten place. (1)

**Comment:** Economic justice is not being served in maintaining Hatch plant in an economically depressed area. (8, 28)

**Comment:** Southern Nuclear underestimates economic and social costs of a radiological accident. (8, 28)

**Response:** *The comments are noted. Socioeconomic impacts and environmental justice of license renewal are part of the staff's evaluation for the SEIS.*

### **Comments Concerning Historic and Archeological Resources**

**Comment:** There are no historical or archeological sites identified on the plant site, and license renewal will not require additional land usage. (5)

**Response:** *The comment is noted. Evaluation of historical and archeological resources is part of the staff's evaluation for the SEIS.*

### **Comments Concerning General Safety Issues**

**Comment:** The plant has kept the local emergency management agency apprised of the plant's status and activities. (7)

**Comment:** The high degree of care and safety involved in construction of any nuclear plant is particularly impressive. (10)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is applying the very best techniques that it can for safety and security. (10)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch has been a good neighbor, operating within its license. Safety and security have never been a problem. (20)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch contributes to emergency response programs to help the area stay prepared to respond to needs for emergency assistance. (21)

**Comment:** Due to the excellent work of the NRC and of Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Plant Hatch is a safe plant. (23)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch keeps the City of Baxley informed of plant status and activities, impressing us with the plant's safety record, and we are confident of the Plant management's ability to operate it safely in the future. (24)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is extremely safety conscious, and their exemplary safety record speaks for itself. (25)

**Comment:** While there are concerns about the on-site storage of the nuclear waste, the Plant is taking every precaution to make it as safe as possible, and all Plant personnel have been very forthcoming with information concerning their methods and procedures for the storage. (31)

**Response:** *The comments are noted. They provide no new information and will not be evaluated further.*

**Comment:** Long-term safety problems, decaying physical structures at the Hatch Plant, and spent fuel storage within five miles of an elementary school must be considered in relicensing the plant. (1)

**Comment:** Degradation of Hatch's turbine shaft due to aging is a very real possibility and should be included in the environmental analysis because of the potential for profound environmental consequences. (28)

**Response:** *The NRC's environmental review is confined to environmental matters relevant to the extended period of operation requested by the applicant. Safety matters are outside the scope of this review. An NRC safety review for the license renewal period is conducted separately. Although a topic may not be within the scope of review for license renewal, the NRC is always concerned with protecting health and safety. Any matter potentially affecting safety can be addressed under processes currently available for any existing operating license absent a license renewal application. The comments make general statements about the license renewal process and provide no new information. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

### **Comments Concerning Accidents and Evaluations**

**Comment:** The possibility and consequences of a future accident have been underestimated given the design of the reactor and that Unit 1's cracked core shroud could fail due to embrittlement and vibration. (8)

**Comment:** Regional authorities and hospitals are unprepared for the effects of nuclear accidents. (30)

**Comment:** Emergency and evacuation plans are inadequate for surrounding communities. (28)

**Response:** *Severe accidents were evaluated in the GEIS and were determined to be a Category 1 issue. A site-specific SAMA analysis for Hatch will be performed by NRC Staff within this environmental analysis. Each nuclear plant must have an approved emergency plan, per 10 CFR Part 50, that is revised periodically to encompass regional growth. Emergency planning is part of the current operating license and is outside the scope of the environmental analysis for license renewal. Therefore, the comments will not be evaluated further.*

### **Comments Concerning Seismic Events**

**Comment:** Siting concerns include earthquake potential and aquifer contamination. (30)

**Comment:** Experts predict a 25% chance of an earthquake hitting somewhere in the east in the next 25 years. (32)

**Comment:** Plant Hatch is located in an earthquake zone that threatens the public and the surrounding environment. (3)

**Comment:** The Southern Company's dam on Lake Sinclair could be broken by an earthquake, releasing a massive amount of water. (35)

**Response:** *Plant design criteria are based upon 10 CFR Part 100, "Reactor Site Criteria," which took into account local fault zones. These comments do not provide any new information and will not be evaluated further.*

### **Comments Concerning Nuclear Waste Storage and Disposal**

**Comment:** There are dangers of having spent nuclear fuel stored on site, and the idea that using spent fuel casks is not a part of relicensing is obscene. An explosion of such a cask would have horrendous consequences. (8, 28)

**Comment:** Temporary storage of nuclear waste is probably not temporary because burying it at Yucca Mountain or on the Goshute Indian Reservation is [unlikely and unacceptable]. (8)

**Comment:** The Altamaha Riverkeeper's Board of Directors are concerned about the impact of onsite dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel. (34)

**Comment:** Generation of more waste including the proposed 5000 additional assemblies will exacerbate growing liability to local governments. (35)

**Response:** *The siting and construction of a national waste repository are the responsibility of the Department of Energy. The Commission believes there is reasonable assurance that at least one mined geologic repository will be available within the first quarter of the twenty-first century (10 CFR Part 51.23). In the interim, onsite spent fuel storage in pools and in dry cask storage facilities continues in accordance with NRC regulations. The Commission has determined that onsite spent fuel can be stored safely for 30 years after the current operating license or a renewed license expires. No new information was provided by the comments. Therefore, they will not be evaluated further.*

### **Comments Concerning Alternative Energy Sources**

**Comment:** The alternatives, including photovoltaic and wind energy, to providing high power output and doing it with clean air sources are relatively limited today. Until we develop something better, nuclear is going to continue providing a source of clean energy in a growing economy. (16)

**Response:** *The comment is noted and provides no new information. Therefore, it will not be evaluated further.*

**Comment:** The applicant has not properly assessed wind power, solar, geothermal, and wood energy/biomass options to replace nuclear. (35)

**Comment:** It is important to look at the new technologies that are available not only from a distributive generation vantage point but also from the broader technology choices that are becoming available worldwide. (3)

**Response:** *The GEIS included an extensive discussion of alternatives. The plant-specific supplement to the GEIS will include an analysis of reasonable alternative energy sources and the option of shutting the plant down and decommissioning the facility.*

### **Miscellaneous Remarks**

**Comment:** What is the status of the waiver of fee SNC requested for the license renewal application and how will it impact the NRC's ability to regulate? (3)

**Response:** *Application waivers were granted for the first two license renewal applicants. However, subsequent requests, including the Hatch request were denied because the NRC review process was believed to be sufficiently stable and predictable. The staff regarded this as a request for information, not a comment.*

### **Summary**

The preparations of the plant-specific supplement to the GEIS will take into account all the relevant issues raised during the scoping process that are described above. Concerns related to the environmental license renewal review of Hatch Nuclear Plant will be considered during the development of the draft SEIS for Hatch Units 1 & 2. The draft SEIS will be available for public comment. Interested Federal, State, and local government agencies; local organizations; and members of the public will be given the opportunity to provide additional input to be considered during the development of the final SEIS.

Concerns identified that are outside the scope of the staff's environmental review have been or will be forwarded to the appropriate NRC program manager.