

June 13, 2001

Mr. Gary Drury
Georgia Coast Watch
Route 9, Box 281
St. Simons Island, Georgia 31522

SUBJECT: EDWIN I HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 - REPLY TO COMMENT PROVIDED DURING THE MAY 10, 2000, ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING MEETING AND REPLY TO JANUARY 19, 2001, STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO LICENSE RENEWAL

Dear Mr. Drury:

On May 10, 2000, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conducted a meeting in Vidalia, Georgia to solicit comments regarding the scope of the environmental review for the renewal of the operating licenses for Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2. One of your comments, that people in the region aren't getting the true picture of the extent of the contamination in the Altamaha River system, was forwarded to us for resolution. Also forwarded to us for resolution were the comments in your letter dated January 19, 2001, regarding "the obsolete design and record of past accidents...".

The Final Environmental Statement for Hatch, issued in March 1978, specifically addressed the release of liquid radioactive effluents into the aquatic environment at the point where the plant's radioactive liquid effluents mix with the Altamaha River. The analysis showed that full-power operation of the facility would not result in a significant impact on the environment. With over twenty years of radioactive effluent releases and corresponding environmental monitoring program data, the staff believes that the plant operation has not resulted in a significant impact on the environment.

The environmental monitoring program data is reported to the NRC annually, and periodically the NRC inspects the licensee's effluent and environmental monitoring programs to verify regulatory compliance and to note trends in the data. These annual reports are available to the public and should provide a true picture of the extent of the contamination in the Altamaha River system.

You also expressed concern about the record of past accidents at the facility. The NRC employs a staff of resident inspectors that investigates events at the facility. If needed, the NRC assists the resident inspector staff in the investigation of an event by dispatching personnel from its regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, and from NRC Headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. For example, to investigate the January 26, 2000, reactor trip of Hatch Unit 1, the NRC initially dispatched a Special Investigation Team to the site, and January 28, 2000,

Mr. Gary Drury

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upgraded the inspection effort to an Augmented Inspection Team. The NRC has determined that none of the events that has occurred at the facility has posed a threat to the health and safety of the public.

We trust that this explanation is responsive to your concern. Should you have any questions or comments on this response, please call me toll-free at 1-800-368-5642.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Leonard N. Olshan, Project Manager, Section 1
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-321 and 50-366

cc: See next page

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Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant

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