

September 22, 2001

Leon Jones, Principal Chief
Eastern Band of Cherokee
P.O. Box 455
Cherokee, NC 28719

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION REVIEW OF THE CATAWBA
NUCLEAR STATION LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Dear Principal Chief Jones:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is seeking input for its environmental review of an application from Duke Energy Corporation (Duke) to renew its operating licenses for Units 1 and 2 of the Catawba Nuclear Station (Catawba), located approximately 18 miles southwest of Charlotte, North Carolina. As described below, the NRC process includes an opportunity for public participation in the environmental review. The NRC will hold public scoping meetings for the Catawba license renewal supplement to the NRC's "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants" (GEIS) (NUREG-1437). These scoping meetings will be held in the Council Chamber at the City Hall, located at 155 Johnston Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina, on Tuesday, October 23, 2001. There will be two sessions to accommodate interested parties. The first session will convene at 1:30 p.m. and will continue until 4:30 p.m. The second session will convene at 7:00 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the meeting, and will continue until 10:00 p.m. The Catawba plant is in close proximity to lands that may be of interest to the Eastern Band of Cherokee. We want to ensure that you are aware of our efforts and, pursuant to our regulations at 10 CFR 51.28(b), the NRC invites the Eastern Band of Cherokee to provide input to the scoping process relating to the NRC's environmental review of the application. The application and the environmental review process are described below.

Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating licenses for Catawba will expire in 2021 for Unit 1 and 2023 for Unit 2. Duke submitted an environmental report as part of its application for renewal of the Catawba operating licenses on June 13, 2001. The application can be found on the Internet at www.nrc.gov/NRC/REACTOR/LR/DUKE/Welcome.pdf. This document can be viewed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR) at 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland and in the York County Library in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Also, the GEIS assesses the scope and impact of environmental effects that would be associated with license renewal at any nuclear power plant site. A copy of this document can also be found on the NRC's website, in the NRC PDR, and in the library.

The NRC is gathering information for the document that will be a Catawba Nuclear Station-specific supplement to the GEIS. The supplement will contain the results of the review of the environmental impacts on the area surrounding the Catawba site that are related to terrestrial

L. Jones

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ecology, aquatic ecology, hydrology, cultural resources, and socioeconomic issues (among others) and will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability of the license renewal action.

Please submit any written comments the Eastern Band of Cherokee may have to offer on the scope of the environmental review by November 22, 2001. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop T-6-D-59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, or by Internet to *CatawbaEIS@nrc.gov*.

At the conclusion of the scoping process, the NRC staff will prepare a summary of the significant issues identified and the conclusions reached and will send a copy to you.

The NRC will prepare a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for public comment and will hold another set of public meetings in the site vicinity to solicit comments on the draft. A copy of the draft SEIS will be sent to you for your review and comment. After consideration of public comments received on the draft, the NRC will prepare a final SEIS. The issuance of a final environmental statement for Catawba is planned for early 2003. If you need additional information regarding the environmental review process, please contact James H. Wilson, Senior Project Manager, at (301) 415-1108.

Sincerely,

/RA/Signed by C. Carpenter

Cynthia A. Carpenter, Chief
Risk Informed Initiatives, Environmental,
Decommissioning, and Rulemaking Branch
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-413 and 50-414

cc: See next page

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DATE	9/19/01	9/19/01	9/20/01	9/22/01

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