

October 31, 1994

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
President, TVA Nuclear and
Chief Nuclear Officer
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR
EXTENSION OF CONSTRUCTION PERMIT FOR WATTS BAR UNIT 1
(TAC NO. M89205)

Dear Mr. Kingsley:

Enclosed is a copy of an "Environmental Assessment and Finding of
No Significant Impact" related to your September 19, 1994, request for an
extension of the latest construction completion date of Construction Permit
No. CPPR-91 from December 31, 1994 to December 31, 1995. The assessment has
been sent to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,
Original signed by

Peter S. Tam, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate II-4
Division of Reactor Projects
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-390

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment

cc w/enclosure: See next page
Mr. Heinz Muller, EPA

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Please include
discussions as indicated
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PDR

Mr. Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr.
Tennessee Valley Authority

cc:

Mr. Craven Crowell, Chairman
Tennessee Valley Authority
ET 12A
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Mr. W. H. Kennoy, Director
Tennessee Valley Authority
ET 12A
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Mr. Johnny H. Hayes, Director
Tennessee Valley Authority
ET 12A
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dr. Mark O. Medford, Vice President
Engineering & Technical Services
Tennessee Valley Authority
3B Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Mr. D. E. Nunn, Vice President
New Plant Completion
Tennessee Valley Authority
3B Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

Mr. J. A. Scalice, Vice President
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
Route 2, P.O. Box 2000
Spring City, TN 37381

General Counsel
Tennessee Valley Authority
ET 11H
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Mr. Roger W. Huston, Manager
Nuclear Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Tennessee Valley Authority
4G Blue Ridge
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT

Mr. B. S. Schofield
Site Licensing Manager
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
Tennessee Valley Authority
Route 2, P.O. Box 2000
Spring City, TN 37381

TVA Representative
Tennessee Valley Authority
11921 Rockville Pike
Suite 402
Rockville, MD 20852

Regional Administrator
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region II
101 Marietta Street, NW., Suite 2900
Atlanta, GA 30323

Senior Resident Inspector
Watts Bar Nuclear Plant
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Route 2, Box 700
Spring City, TN 37381

The Honorable Robert Aikman
County Executive
Rhea County Courthouse
Dayton, TN 37321

The Honorable Garland Lanksford
County Executive
Meigs County Courthouse
Decatur, TN 37322

Mr. Michael H. Mobley, Director
Division of Radiological Health
3rd Floor, L and C Annex
401 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37243-1532

Ms. Danielle Droitsch
Energy Project
The Foundation for
Global Sustainability
P.O. Box 1101
Knoxville, TN 37901

Mr. Bill Harris
Route 1, Box 26
Ten Mile, TN 37880

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 1

DOCKET NO. 50-390

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an extension of the latest construction completion date specified in Construction Permit No. CPPR-91 issued to Tennessee Valley Authority (permittee) for Watts Bar Nuclear Plant (WBN), Unit 1. The facility is located at the permittee's site on the west bank of the Tennessee River approximately 50 miles northeast of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action:

The proposed action would extend the latest construction completion date of Construction Permit No. CPPR-91 from December 31, 1994, to December 31, 1995. The proposed action is in response to the permittee's request dated September 19, 1994.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The proposed action is needed because the construction and modification of the facility is not yet fully completed. Following completion of hot functional testing, the permittee conducted an extensive review of the remaining scope of work required to complete the unit. The resulting detailed completion plan indicates fuel load for the unit will occur in the spring of 1995. The requested extension period includes contingency in case any adjustments to the schedule are needed.

The delays associated with the above efforts to ensure that WBN meets regulatory requirements and licensing commitments make it necessary for the permittee to request an extension of the expiration date for Construction Permit No. CPPR-91 until December 31, 1995.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The environmental impacts associated with the construction of the facility have been previously discussed and evaluated in the staff's Final Environmental Statement (FES) issued on November 9, 1972 for the construction permit stage which covered construction of both units. The FES issued in December 1978 for the operating license stage addressed the environmental impacts of construction activities not addressed previously. The activities included: 1) construction of the new transmission route for the Watts Bar - Volunteer 500 kV line, (2) construction of the settling pond for siltation control for construction runoff at a different location from that originally proposed in the Final Environmental Statement - Construction Permit (FES-CP), 3) the relocation of the blowdown diffuser from the originally proposed site indicated in the FES-CP. The staff addressed the terrestrial and aquatic environmental impacts in the Final Environmental Statement - Operating License (FES-OL) and concluded that the assessment presented in the FES-CP remains valid. The staff is currently reviewing updated environmental information and plans to issue findings in a supplement to the FES-OL in early 1995. The construction of Unit 1 is essentially 100 percent complete; therefore, most of the construction impacts discussed in the FES have already occurred.

Since this action would only extend the period of construction, it does not involve impacts different from those described and analyzed in the original environmental impact statement. The proposed extension will not allow any work to be performed that is not already allowed by the existing construction permit. The extension will merely grant the permittee more time to complete construction and modification in accordance with the previously approved construction permit. The activities related to the various corrective activities will result in additional workforce, being primarily engineering and technical personnel rather than construction personnel. At the present time, this workforce is basically dedicated to the completion of Unit 1. This previously increased workforce is declining as the corrective activities are completed and the unit approaches fuel loading. A large percentage of the additional workforce is contractors and consultants who do not live in the area and use only temporary quarters. While the current workforce level has caused a temporary, increased demand for services in the community and increased traffic on local roads, there are no major impacts due to the arrival of workers' families and demands for services necessary to support permanent residents (for example, housing and schools).

Based on the foregoing, the NRC staff has concluded that the proposed action would have no significant environmental impact. Since this action would only extend the period of construction activities described in the FES, it does not involve any different impacts or a significant change to those impacts described and analyzed in the original environmental impact

statement. Consequently, an environmental impact statement addressing the proposed action is not required.

Alternatives Considered:

A possible alternative to the proposed action would be to deny the request. Under this alternative, the permittee would not be able to complete construction of the facility. This would result in denial of the benefit of power production. This option would not eliminate the environmental impacts of construction already incurred.

If construction were halted and not completed, site redress activities would restore some small areas to their natural states. This would be a slight environmental benefit, but much outweighed by the economic losses from denial of use of a facility that is nearly completed. Therefore, this alternative is rejected.

Alternative Use of Resources:

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in the FES for Watts Bar.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

The NRC staff reviewed the permittee's request and applicable documents referenced therein that support this extension. The NRC did not consult other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for this action. Based upon the environmental assessment, the staff concludes that this action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For details with respect to this action, see the request for extension dated September 19, 1994, which is available for public inspection at the Commission Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, D.C. and at the Local Public Document Room, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Library, 1001 Broad Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland this 31st day of October 1994.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Frederick J. Hebdon", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Frederick J. Hebdon, Director
Project Directorate II-4
Division of Reactor Projects I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation