



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

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August 2, 2002

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Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop T6-D59
Washington, DC 20555-0001

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Rules and Directives
Branch
USNRC

SUBJECT: Generic Draft Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Supplement 8 McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 & 2 CEQ No. 020204

Dear Sir/Madam:

Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the document entitled, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants Regarding the McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 & 2," Draft Report for Comment, NUREG-1437 (Draft GEIS). The proposed federal action is the renewal of the Operating Licenses (OL) for McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 & 2. We appreciate your compliance with the disclosure and public access aspects of the NEPA process. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the results of our review of the Generic DEIS.

The Generic DEIS discusses the proposed action of renewing the OL for McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 & 2. Duke Energy Corporation submitted the application for renewal. The document also discusses the alternatives to renewal which were evaluated.

Rad waste, which is usually considered a "low volume waste stream," is any waste stream (i.e., ion exchange regenerate, etc.), that has a radioactive component. EPA Region 4's review of this Draft GEIS found no issues related to nuclear or environmental radiation which were significant enough to comment on or ask for clarification. However, EPA does not regulate the radioactive component of any waste streams; that is the responsibility of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The NRC regulates the alpha, beta, and gamma radioactivity of all the waste streams at nuclear plants.

Based on the sufficiency of information, alternatives evaluation, and potential environmental impacts over which EPA has authority, the document received a rating of "EC-1," (Environmental Concerns - Adequate Information). That is, the review identified environmental impacts which should be avoided, in order to fully protect the environment. Specifically, the

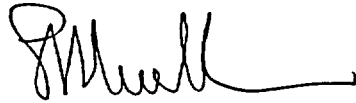
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Call = James H. Wilson (JHW1)

possibility of environmental impacts resulting from a release due to a severe accident are a concern. However, we understand that NRC along with DOE, FEMA, and EPA are taking additional steps to ensure that nuclear plants are prepared for such an occurrence. In addition, while the Draft GEIS provides reasonable analysis of the proposed action and alternatives, we look forward to the inclusion of clarifying information in the Final GEIS. Our comments are attached.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments regarding this project. If you have any questions, you may contact Ramona McConney of my staff at (404) 562-9615.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Mueller", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
Office of Environmental Assessment

Attachment

**EPA Comments on
Generic Draft Environmental Impact Statement for
License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Supplement 8
McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 & 2
CEQ No. 020204**

General: The document does not mention whether power demands on the McGuire facility are expected to change significantly from present levels during the license renewal period (up to 20 years). If consumer power needs in the service area increase significantly, please clarify how this would affect operations, particularly with regard to the cooling system, effluent release, and waste quantity. The anticipated growth rate of the service area during the renewal period should be taken into consideration.

Groundwater: Page 4-35 discusses groundwater use and quality. The document mentions that the facility uses <100 gpm from six existing groundwater wells (page 2-8). However, Appendix E does not list information pertaining to the regulatory status of these groundwater wells.

Cultural Resources: We note that the licensee should take care that historic properties are not inadvertently impacted during normal operational and maintenance activities (Page 4-30).