

Official Transcript of Proceedings

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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Fort Calhoun Station
Afternoon Public Meeting

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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The Fort Calhoun Station

LICENSE RENEWAL

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

+ + + + +

AFTERNOON PUBLIC MEETING

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2003

The meeting was held at 1:30 p.m. at the
Days Hotel Carlisle, 10909 M Street, Omaha,
Nebraska, Chip Cameron, Facilitator, presiding.

SPEAKERS:

CHIP CAMERON, FACILITATOR

JOHN TAPPERT

WILLIAM BURTON

JACK CUSHING

KEN ZAHN

W. GARY GATES

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1 MR. CAMERON: Good afternoon
2 everyone. My name is Chip Cameron of the special
3 counsel for public liaison at the Nuclear
4 Regulatory Commission. And I'd like to welcome all
5 of you to our meeting this afternoon.

6 The topic of the meeting is the draft
7 environmental impact statement that the NRC has
8 prepared on the request of the Omaha Public Power
9 District to renew the operating license at the Fort
10 Calhoun Nuclear Power Station Unit 1.

11 And it's my pleasure to serve as your
12 facilitator for today's meeting, and in that role
13 I'm going to try help you to all have a productive
14 meeting and to assist you in seeing if we can
15 achieve the meeting objectives.

16 In terms of objectives, the staff of the
17 Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the NRC, will be
18 going into a little bit more detail on those
19 objectives, but simply stated, it's to ensure that
20 we clearly explain to all of you what the NRC's
21 process is for evaluating an application for a
22 license renewal and also to clearly explain what
23 the findings are in the draft environmental impact
24 statement that's been prepared on this license
25 renewal application. And we also want to listen to

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1 your recommendations, your advice, your concerns on
2 these issues.

3 We are going to be taking written comments
4 on this draft environmental impact statement, but
5 we wanted to be here with you tonight to -- or this
6 afternoon to listen to your comments. You may hear
7 things that will help you to decide whether you
8 want to submit a written comment, but if you don't
9 submit a written comment, anything that you say
10 this afternoon will carry the same weight as that
11 written comment. And we are keeping a record today
12 of the proceedings and Deanna is our stenographer.
13 And I'll say a few more words when I get to ground
14 rules about what we need to do to make sure that we
15 have a clean transcript of the meeting.

16 In terms of the format for the meeting,
17 it's basically going to be done in two segments.
18 The first segment is to give all of you some
19 background on the NRC process, and most importantly
20 on the findings in the draft environmental impact
21 statement. And we'll be hopefully having an
22 interactive discussion with you and answer your
23 questions on those background presentations.

24 After that's done, we're going to give you
25 an opportunity to make a more formal comment to us

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1 on any recommendations that you have in regard to
2 the draft environmental impact statement.

3 In terms of ground rules, if you have
4 something to say, just signal me and I'll bring you
5 this microphone. Give us your name, please, and
6 affiliation, if appropriate, and ask your question
7 or make your comment. And I would ask that only
8 one person at a time speak so that we can not only
9 get a clean transcript -- so that Deanna knows who
10 is speaking -- but so that we can give our full
11 attention to whomever has the floor at the time.

12 I would also ask you to try to be concise
13 in your comments. I don't think that we'll have
14 any problem this afternoon with running over the
15 4:30 time, but if you do have a formal comment to
16 make, please limit that to five minutes. That's
17 not a hard and fast rule, it's guidance, but try to
18 give us your comments in five, five minutes.

19 In terms of the agenda, in a minute I'm
20 going to ask John Tappert, who's right here, to
21 give you all a formal welcome and just a brief
22 overview on the NRC's license renewal process.

23 And I wanted to introduce all of our
24 speakers also and give you some idea of their
25 background so that you know what types of expertise

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1 we have involved on this project. Now, John is the
2 chief of the environmental section and the license
3 renewal and the environmental impacts program at
4 the NRC. And John's staff are responsible for
5 preparing the environmental impact statements, not
6 only on a license renewal application, but on any
7 project that our office of nuclear reactor
8 regulation works on. And he's been with the agency
9 for approximately 12 years. And he has been a
10 resident inspector out at nuclear power plants for
11 the NRC. He has a bachelor's in aerospace and
12 oceanographic engineering from Virginia Tech and a
13 master's degree in environmental engineering from
14 Johns Hopkins University.

15 John will give us a welcome and then we're
16 going to move to William, better known as Butch,
17 Burton who is right over here. And Butch is the
18 project manager for the safety evaluation on the
19 Fort Calhoun license renewal application. And he
20 is in the license renewal section, again in the
21 license renewal and environmental impact program.
22 He's been involved in other license renewal
23 projects, the one for the Hatch plant down in
24 Georgia. He's been involved in emergency
25 operations work at the NRC developing performance

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1 indicators to evaluate how nuclear reactors are
2 meeting the regulations, and also on advanced --
3 review of advanced reactors that come in to the
4 NRC. Has a bachelor's in nuclear engineering from
5 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Butch is going
6 to tell you about license renewal, the overall
7 process.

8 Then we're going to get more detailed and
9 get to the subject that we're here to discuss with
10 you tonight, which is the draft environmental
11 impact statement. And we have Jack Cushing right
12 here who is the project manager on the
13 environmental review for the Fort Calhoun license
14 renewal application, and he works for John Tappert.
15 And Jack will give us an overview of the
16 environmental review process. He's been with the
17 agency for about five years. Before he joined the
18 agency, he was a licensed reactor operator and that
19 was at Maine Yankee, I believe. And he has a
20 bachelor's in marine engineering from the Mass.
21 Maritime Academy. And after each of the
22 presentations by Butch and by Jack, we'll go out to
23 you to see if there's any questions that we can
24 answer.

25 Then we're going to get to the heart of the

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1 discussion today, and that's the findings and the
2 draft environmental impact statements. And we have
3 Dr. Ken Zahn right here from Lawrence Livermore Lab
4 and they have been the lead in assisting the NRC to
5 evaluate the environmental impacts that might occur
6 from the license renewal application. And Dr. Zahn
7 is the group leader of the environmental
8 evaluations group at Lawrence Livermore Lab, which
9 is in Livermore, California. And that group does
10 NEPA review for the Department of Energy, National
11 Environmental Policy Act review for the NRC as in
12 this case, and he has a PhD in chemistry from the
13 University of Illinois. So he'll talk about the
14 findings; again we'll go out to you for questions.

15 There's one specific aspect of the
16 environmental impact statement called severe
17 accident mitigation alternatives, and after
18 Dr. Zahn is done, we're going to ask Jack Cushing
19 to talk about those. Those are known as SAMAs, I
20 believe, and Jack will tell you about those and
21 also what the process is for submitting comments on
22 this.

23 And then we're going to go out to you for
24 any final questions and then formal comments to the
25 Agency. And I would just thank all of you for

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1 being here this afternoon and I'm going to ask John
2 Tappert to give us the Agency's official welcome.

3 MR. TAPPERT: Thank you, Chip. Good
4 afternoon and welcome. As Chip said, my name is
5 John Tappert, and I'm chief of the environmental
6 section of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory
7 Commission. On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory
8 Commission, I'd like to thank you for coming here
9 to participate in our process.

10 As Chip said, there's several things we'd
11 like to cover today. I'd like to briefly go over
12 the purpose of today's meeting. First of all, we'd
13 like to give you a brief overview of the entire
14 license renewal process, this includes both the
15 safety review as well as the environmental review,
16 which is the principal purpose of today's meeting.

17 Next we're going to provide you the
18 preliminary results of our review which assessed
19 the environmental impacts associated with extending
20 the operating license of Fort Calhoun Station for
21 an additional 20 years. Then we'll give you some
22 information about the schedule we're going to
23 follow and additional opportunities you will have
24 to participate in the process. At the conclusion
25 of the staff's presentation, we'll be happy to

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1 receive any questions or comments that you may have
2 today.

3 First, let me provide some general context
4 for the license renewal program. The Atomic Energy
5 Act gives the NRC the authority to issue operating
6 licenses to commercial power plants for a period of
7 40 years. That operating license for Fort Calhoun
8 will expire in 2013. Our regulations also make
9 provisions for extending those operating licenses
10 for an additional 20 years as part of the license
11 renewal program, and OPPD has requested license
12 renewal for Fort Calhoun.

13 As part of the NRC's review of that
14 application, we sent a team of environmental
15 experts out to the site last summer. We also held
16 a public meeting to receive your input early in our
17 review process. As we indicated at that earlier
18 scoping meeting, we've returned here now today to
19 provide you the preliminary results in our
20 environmental impact statement. Again, the
21 principle reason of the meeting here today is to
22 receive your questions and comments on that track.

23 With that short summary I'd like to have
24 Butch give us a brief overview of the safety
25 portion of license renewal.

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1 MR. BURTON: Thank you, John. As
2 Chip mentioned, my name is Butch Burton. I'm the
3 project manager for the safety review for the
4 application for license renewal for Fort Calhoun.

5 Before I talk about the license renewal
6 process and the staff safety review, I'd like to
7 talk a little bit about the Nuclear Regulatory
8 Commission, which we generally call the NRC.

9 John mentioned the Atomic Energy Act. The
10 Atomic Energy Act of 1954 authorizes the NRC to
11 regulate the civilian use of nuclear material. The
12 NRC's mission is threefold: to insure adequate
13 protection of public health and safety; to protect
14 the environment; and to provide for the common
15 defense and security. The Atomic Energy Act
16 provides for a 40-year license term for power
17 reactors, but it also allows for renewal. The
18 40-year term is based primarily on economic and
19 anti-trust considerations, rather than safety
20 limitations.

21 As Mr. Tappert indicated, OPPD has applied
22 for a license renewal under 10 CFR PART 54 and
23 requests authorization to operate Fort Calhoun for
24 up to an additional 20 years. The current
25 operating license for Fort Calhoun will expire in

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1 the year 2013.

2 Now I'll talk a little bit about license
3 renewal, which is governed by the requirements in
4 PART 54, as I mentioned, which we generally call
5 the license renewal rule. It defines the
6 regulatory process by which a nuclear utility, such
7 as OPPD, applies for a renewed operating license.
8 License renewal rule incorporates 10 CFR PART 51
9 the environmental portion by reference. 10 CFR
10 PART 51 provides for the preparation of an
11 environmental impact statement, or an EIS.

12 The license renewal process defined in PART
13 54 is very similar to the original licensing
14 process, in that it involves a safety review, an
15 environmental impact evaluation, plant inspections,
16 and review by the Advisory Committee on Reactor
17 Safeguards or the ACRS.

18 The ACRS is a group of scientists and
19 nuclear industry experts who serve as a consulting
20 body to the commission. The ACRS performs an
21 independent review of the license renewal
22 application and the staff safety evaluation and
23 they report their findings and recommendations
24 directly to the commission.

25 The next slide illustrates two parallel

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1 processes. The safety review process, which you
2 see at the top of the slide, and the environmental
3 review process at the bottom of the slide. These
4 processes are used by the staff to evaluate two
5 separate areas of license renewal.

6 The safety review involves the staff's
7 review of the technical information in the license
8 renewal application to verify with reasonable
9 assurance that the plant can continue to operate
10 safely during the period of extended operation.
11 The staff assesses how the applicant proposes to
12 monitor or manage aging or certain components that
13 are within the scope of license renewal.

14 The staff's review is documented in a
15 safety evaluation report, and the safety evaluation
16 report is provided to the ACRS for review. The
17 ACRS then generates the report of their own -- of
18 its own to document their review of the staff's
19 evaluation.

20 The safety review process involves two to
21 three inspections which are documented in NRC
22 inspection reports. These inspection reports are
23 considered with the safety evaluation report and
24 the ACRS report in the NRC's decision to renew
25 nuclear units' operating licenses. If there is a

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1 petition to intervene, sufficient standing could be
2 demonstrated, and an aspect within the scope of
3 license renewal has been identified, then hearings
4 may also be involved in the renewal process. These
5 hearings will play an important role in the NRC's
6 decision of the renewal application as well.

7 At the bottom of the slide is the other
8 parallel process, the environmental review, which
9 involves scoping activities, preparation of the
10 draft's supplemental -- draft supplement to the
11 generic environmental impact statement,
12 solicitation of public comments on the draft
13 supplement, and then the issuance of a final
14 supplement to the generic environmental impact
15 statement. This document also factors into the
16 Agency's decision on the application.

17 During the safety evaluation, the staff
18 assesses the effectiveness of the existing or
19 proposed inspection and maintenance activities to
20 manage aging effects applicable to a defined scope
21 of passive structures and components. PART 54
22 requires the application to also include evaluation
23 of time-limited aging analyses, which are those
24 design analyses that specifically include
25 assumptions about plant life, usually 40 years.

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1 Currently, regulations are adequate for
2 addressing active components, such as pumps and
3 valves, which are continuously challenged to reveal
4 failures and degradation such that corrective
5 actions can be taken.

6 Current regulations also exist to address
7 other aspects of the original license, such as
8 security and emergency planning. These current
9 regulations will also apply during the extended
10 period of operations.

11 At this time if there are any questions on
12 anything I've said, I'd be happy to take them.
13 Okay. Turn it back over to Chip.

14 MR. CAMERON: Anybody have any
15 questions for Butch? And after you hear Jack
16 Cushing -- you heard safety aspects, Jack is going
17 to talk about environmental aspects. If there are
18 questions about the relationship between those two
19 evaluation processes, we can get to them after Jack
20 is done. Jack?

21 MR. CUSHING: Hello. Thank you,
22 Chip. I'd like to welcome everybody to the
23 meeting. My name is Jack Cushing, I'm the
24 environmental project manager for the Fort Calhoun
25 Station environmental review. I'm responsible for

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1 coordinating the efforts of the NRC staff and our
2 contractors in performing that review.

3 I'd like to discuss NEPA, and that's the
4 National Environmental Policy Act. It's one of the
5 most significant pieces of environmental
6 legislation ever passed. It requires all federal
7 agencies to use a systematic approach to consider
8 environmental impacts during certain decisionmaking
9 processes. It requires that we examine the
10 environmental impacts of the proposed action and
11 consider mitigation measures, which are things that
12 could be done to decrease the environmental impact,
13 when the impacts are severe, NEPA requires that we
14 consider alternatives to the proposed action, and
15 that the impacts of those alternatives also be
16 evaluated. Finally, NEPA requires that we disclose
17 all this information and we invite public
18 participation to evaluate it.

19 The NRC has determined that it will prepare
20 an environmental impact statement associated with
21 the renewal of an operating license for an
22 additional 20 years; therefore, following the
23 process required by NEPA, we have prepared a draft
24 environmental impact statement associated with the
25 operation of Fort Calhoun during the period of

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1 extended operation. That draft environmental
2 impact statement was issued last month, and the
3 meetings today are being held to receive your
4 comments on it.

5 This slide describes the objective of our
6 environmental review. Simply put, we are trying to
7 determine whether the renewal of the Fort Calhoun
8 Station license is acceptable from an environmental
9 standpoint. If license renewal is a viable option,
10 whether or not that option is exercised or not.
11 Whether the plant actually operates for an
12 additional 20 years will be determined by others
13 such as OPPD and state regulatory agencies and will
14 also depend on the outcome of the safety review.

15 This slide shows in a little more detail
16 the environmental review process associated with
17 license renewal for Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1.
18 We received the application last January. The
19 notice of the intent was published in The Federal
20 Register in May of 2002 and informed the public
21 that we were going to prepare an environmental
22 impact statement and invited the public to provide
23 comments on the scope of the review.

24 In June of 2002, during the scoping period,
25 we held two public meetings here in Omaha to

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1 receive the public comments on the scope of the
2 issues that should be included in the environmental
3 impact statement for the Fort Calhoun Station Unit
4 1 license renewal.

5 Also in June, we went to the Fort Calhoun
6 Station with a combined team of NRC staff and
7 personnel from the four national laboratories with
8 backgrounds in the specific technical and
9 scientific disciplines required to perform the
10 environmental review. We familiarized ourselves
11 with the site and the staff from OPPD to discuss
12 the information to submit it in the report and we
13 also examined OPDD's evaluation process.

14 In addition, we contacted federal, state,
15 and local officials as well as local service
16 agencies to receive their input on and obtain
17 information on the Fort Calhoun Station.

18 At the close of the scoping comment period,
19 we gathered up and considered all the comments that
20 we had received from the public and from state and
21 federal agencies. Many of these comments
22 contributed significantly to the document that we
23 are here today to discuss.

24 In July of last year we issued requests for
25 additional information to ensure that any

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1 information we relied on and that had not been
2 included in the original application was submitted
3 on the docket so that it would be publicly
4 available.

5 A month ago we issued the draft
6 environmental impact statement for public comment.
7 This is Supplement 12 to the generic environmental
8 impact statement, because we rely on findings in
9 the generic environmental impact statement for part
10 of our conclusions. The report is a draft, not
11 because it's incomplete, but rather we are in the
12 second period of a public comment to allow you and
13 members of the public to take a look at the
14 results, write any comments you may have on the
15 report. After we gather these comments and
16 evaluate them, we may decide to change portions of
17 the environmental impact statement based on those
18 comments. The NRC will then issue a final
19 environmental impact statement related to license
20 renewal for the Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1.

21 Are there any questions about what we're
22 doing today and how we worked on the environmental
23 impact statement?

24 MR. CAMERON: Anybody have a
25 question? One question that might be helpful for

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1 understanding all of this is how does the
2 generic -- how does the final environmental impact
3 statement on Fort Calhoun come together with the
4 safety review? Just in terms of timing, when can
5 the public expect a decision on this?

6 MR. CUSHING: Okay. After we
7 receive the comments, we will issue the final
8 environmental impact statement, and that would go
9 to the EPA and they will review it to see if
10 there's any problems with it. And we will also
11 give that -- mail the EIS to anybody that signs up
12 for a copy today. And the environmental impact
13 statement, along with the safety evaluation, the
14 inspection findings, and the ACRS report will go to
15 the commission to be used in their final decision
16 process.

17 MR. CAMERON: Okay. That's good.
18 And time frame for when that might get to the
19 commission?

20 MR. CUSHING: The time frame we're
21 looking at, we will be issuing the draft
22 environmental -- the final environmental impact
23 statement on August 15th. And the license -- the
24 renewed license, if it does -- depending on the
25 results of the safety review, it's due in November

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1 of 2003.

2 MR. CAMERON: Okay. So November of
3 2003 is going to be the end of the process
4 basically, generally speaking.

5 MR. CUSHING: Generally speaking
6 that'll be when we finish the license renewal.

7 MR. CAMERON: Okay. Great. Thank
8 you very much, Jack.

9 And you've heard process and now we're
10 going to go to substance. And Ken Zahn is going to
11 talk about the findings in the draft environmental
12 impact statement.

13 DR. ZAHN: Thanks, Chip. As Chip
14 mentioned earlier, I led the technical team, the
15 contractor team. I work and supervise a group at
16 Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. We are
17 intimately involved in the NEPA process there for
18 D&E (phonetic) projects as well.

19 I wanted to tell you a little bit about the
20 information gathering process and the composition
21 of the team, and then I'll talk a bit about the
22 analysis process and quickly step through the draft
23 report's results.

24 As Jack mentioned earlier, to develop the
25 supplemental environmental impact statement, we

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1 reviewed the information in OPPD's license renewal
2 application, then visited the site last summer.
3 Besides reviewing onsite facilities and documents,
4 we talked to federal, state, and local agencies
5 including permitting authorities and social service
6 agencies. We also discussed such matters as
7 cultural and historic resources with the state
8 historic preservation office or SHPA.

9 Following your submission of comments
10 during a public comment period last summer, the NRC
11 staff and the national laboratory team reviewed the
12 comments, considered the suggestions, and then
13 provided responses to the comments, which are
14 included in Appendix A in the draft report.

15 As noted earlier, to conduct the
16 environmental review, we established a team made up
17 of members of the NRC staff as well as experts in
18 various fields from the national laboratory
19 complex. These laboratory staff members who were
20 involved included members from Pacific Northwest
21 National Laboratory, Los Alamos National
22 Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory,
23 and Argonne National Laboratory.

24 This slide gives you an idea, a general
25 idea, of some of the areas of technical information

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1 that these experts evaluated. If you look far to
2 the left you'll see socioeconomic, for example, and
3 such issues here that were considered included
4 public services, things like tourism, recreation,
5 economy, aesthetics, housing, and public safety, as
6 well as others.

7 Environmental justice is an area in which
8 both low income or minority populations are
9 considered and their impacts of -- impacts of the
10 project within about a 50-mile radius of the site.

11 The atmospheric science at the top left of
12 the slide implies that we did look at issues
13 dealing with air quality and the relationship with
14 the state regulatory agencies.

15 On radiation protection, here we looked at
16 such issues as exposure to the public, potential
17 exposure to the public, and potential occupational
18 exposure to the workers at the plant.

19 In the middle of the slide you'll see a
20 bullet -- or a note on terrestrial ecology and to
21 the far right, aquatic ecology. In these areas we
22 basically look at both the terrestrial species that
23 are threatened and endangered, according to the
24 federal system, and also to those species that
25 inhabit the aquatic environment, primarily you

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1 might expect the Missouri River.

2 Finally, we also looked at nuclear safety
3 issues, which will be the subject of a later
4 discussion, and land use issues. And under the
5 land use issues we also looked at such things as
6 the impacts of operations a transmission line
7 complex.

8 Discussions on the site background and the
9 potential impacts of these environmentally-related
10 topics and potential or postulated accidents are
11 also found -- or primarily found in Chapters 2
12 through 5 of the draft report.

13 Next I'd like to discuss the analysis
14 approach used and the preliminary results of the
15 review as reflected in the draft. The generic
16 environmental impact statement for license renewal,
17 new Reg. 1437, was mentioned earlier as the GEIS,
18 G-E-I-S, that's a commonly used acronym. In that
19 document 92 environmental issues are identified and
20 these are evaluated for license renewal.

21 Sixty-nine of these issues are considered generic
22 or Category 1, which means the impacts are common
23 to all reactors or common to all reactors with
24 certain features such as plants that have cooling
25 towers. And you'll find the Category 1 designation

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1 at the upper left-hand side of that top block.

2 For the other 23 issues, the noncategory 1
3 issues, they are referred to as Category 2. The
4 NRC found that the impacts were not the same at all
5 sites and therefore site-specific analysis was
6 needed. Only certain issues addressed in the
7 generic environmental impact statement are
8 applicable to Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1 because
9 of the design and the location of the plant. For
10 these generic issues that are applicable to Fort
11 Calhoun, we assessed if there was any new
12 information related to the issue that might change
13 the conclusion in the generic environmental impact
14 statement, and this is what's implied by the block
15 marked "New and Significant" on the slide on the
16 lower left.

17 If there is no new information, then the
18 conclusions of the generic environmental impact
19 statement are adopted. If new information is
20 identified and it's determined to be significant,
21 then the site-specific analysis for that issue
22 would be performed. For the site-specific issues
23 that are related to Fort Calhoun, a site-specific
24 analysis was indeed performed.

25 Finally, during the scoping period, the

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1 public was invited to provide information on
2 potential new issues, as shown on the upper right
3 portion of the slide. And the team, during its
4 review, also looked to see if there were any new
5 issues that needed evaluation.

6 For each issue identified in the generic
7 environmental impact statement, an impact level is
8 assigned. These levels are described in Chapter 1
9 of the draft report and they are consistent with
10 the guidelines of the Federal Executive branch's
11 counsel on environmental quality, or CQ, which
12 basically provides guidance to all federal agencies
13 on the implementation of the National Environmental
14 Policy Act, or NEPA.

15 Definitions that you see here include those
16 for small impact. Here, small impact -- for a
17 small impact the effect is not detectable or too
18 small to destabilize or noticeably alter any
19 important attribute of the resource. If one were
20 to use an example, one might consider if the
21 proportion of fish loss is so small that it cannot
22 be detected in relation to the total population in
23 a river as a result of use of our intake structure,
24 then that impact would be small.

25 For a moderate impact, the effect is

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1 sufficient to alter noticeably, but not destabilize
2 important attributes of the resource. Using the
3 fishery source example again. If, for example,
4 losses at the intake would cause the population to
5 decline and then stabilize at a lower level, the
6 impact might be considered to be moderate.

7 Finally, for an impact to be considered
8 large, the effect is clearly noticeable and
9 sufficient to destabilize important attributes of
10 the resource. So for example, if fish loss through
11 the intake structure use caused the population to
12 decline to a point where it can't be stabilized and
13 it continues to decline, then the impact would be
14 considered large.

15 Let me briefly address what is covered in
16 several of the environmentally important chapters,
17 especially Chapters 2 and 4. In Chapter 2, we
18 describe the power plant's systems generally and
19 discuss the general environmental setting around
20 the plant, the environmental baseline, if you will.

21 In Chapter 3 you might note that the
22 licensee has not identified any plant refurbishment
23 activities that were necessary prior to the period
24 of extended operations, so no analysis of potential
25 environmental impacts of refurbishment needed to be

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1 considered.

2 In Chapter 4 we looked at the potential
3 environmental impacts for an additional 20 years of
4 operation of the Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1. The
5 site-specific issues the team discussed in detail
6 in Chapter 4 include potential impacts of operating
7 the cooling system, transmission lines, land use
8 impacts, and radiological impacts of normal
9 operations, impacts related to water use, water
10 quality, and the potential impacts to sensitive
11 aquatic and terrestrial resources, such as
12 federally threatened or endangered species.

13 I'll take just a few moments to identify
14 some of the highlights of review. And if you have
15 additional questions on our draft results, we'd be
16 glad to try to answer those or let one of the team
17 members who might be with us here today answer them
18 for you. Thanks a lot.

19 One of the topics we looked at closely and
20 discussed in some depth in Chapter 4 are the
21 potential -- is the potential impact of operating a
22 cooling system for the Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1
23 reactor. Fort Calhoun Station has a once-through
24 heat dissipation system which uses water from the
25 Missouri River to condense the steam used to

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1 produce the electricity, then releases the cooling
2 water back to the river. We did not identify any
3 new and significant information from any of the
4 Category 1 issues related to either the cooling
5 system -- I'm sorry, related to the cooling system,
6 either through the scoping process, by analysis of
7 information provided by the applicant, or on the
8 part of the staff during its visit or information
9 reviews of other documents.

10 With respect to those Category 2
11 environmental issues related to the cooling system,
12 the staff found the potential impacts of heat shock
13 or impingement or entrainment of fish or shellfish
14 during the cooling water intake screen operation
15 are small.

16 Radiological impacts are a Category 1
17 issue. Because it's often a concern to the public,
18 I wanted to take just a few minutes to briefly
19 discuss it here. During the site visit, we looked
20 at the effluent release and monitoring program
21 documentation. We looked at how the gaseous and
22 liquid effluents were treated and released, as well
23 as how solid wastes were treated, packaged, and
24 shipped. This information is found in Chapter 2
25 of the draft supplemental EIS.

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1 We also looked at how the applicant
2 determines and demonstrates that they are in
3 compliance with regulations for release of
4 radiological effluents. This slide shows you the
5 near-site and on-site locations that the applicant
6 has monitored for airborne releases and direct
7 radiation. There are also other monitoring
8 stations beyond the site boundary including
9 locations where fish, milk, water, and food
10 products are sampled. Releases from the plant and
11 the results of off-site potential doses are not
12 expected to increase on a year-to-year basis during
13 the 20-year license renewal term. Additionally, no
14 new or significant -- and significant information
15 was identified during the staff's review, the
16 public's input during the scoping process, or
17 evaluation of other available information.

18 Last issue I'd like to discuss among
19 those evaluated in Chapter 4 is that of the
20 federally threatened endangered species. A
21 description of the terrestrial and aquatic ecology
22 of the area and the potential for endangered and
23 threatened species at the site is given in Chapter
24 2.

25 Although the bald eagle was originally

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1 listed as federally endangered, its status was
2 lowered to threatened status in 1995 and it's being
3 considered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4 for complete delisting, due to its -- primarily due
5 to its level of recovery in the U.S., which has
6 been nothing short of spectacular, really. There
7 are no known bald eagle nesting sites at the Fort
8 Calhoun Station, although the birds may use the
9 area for forging, most commonly along the Missouri
10 River.

11 Other federally threatened and endangered
12 terrestrial species, those that live on land, if
13 you will, were considered -- that were considered
14 included the least tern and piping plover, both
15 bird species, which are not shown on the slide, and
16 the western prairie fringed orchid, a flower
17 species. These species have not been found at the
18 Ford Calhoun Station and the potential for impact
19 to them from license renewal is considered small.
20 Based on the information available to the staff, it
21 was concluded that the continued operation of the
22 station may affect, but is not likely to adversely
23 affect, the bald eagle and it would have no effect
24 on the other three threatened or endangered
25 terrestrial species.

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1 There is one federally endangered aquatic
2 species, the pallid sturgeon, shown here on the
3 left. This sturgeon is also discussed in the
4 report. Occurrences of the sturgeon have been
5 reported in the Missouri River, both upstream and
6 downstream of Fort Calhoun Station, and extensive
7 habitat restoration projects have been implemented
8 in Missouri by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
9 and these programs have been ongoing since the mid
10 '70s. Based on the information available to the
11 staff, it was concluded that continued operation of
12 the station again may affect, but is not likely to
13 adversely affect the pallid sturgeon.

14 Additionally, the NRC is presently in
15 consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service on
16 the two endangered -- on the endangered and
17 threatened species under the provisions of Section
18 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

19 For all the Fort Calhoun Station issues
20 that the team reviewed, we found that there were no
21 new and significant information that was identified
22 either during the scoping process, by the licensee
23 during their development of the environmental
24 review documentation, or by the staff during our
25 analysis.

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1 We also looked at issues for the uranium
2 fuel cycle and solid waste management and for
3 decommissioning. These two topics are discussed
4 separately in Chapters 6 and 7 of the report. Both
5 of these issues are Category 1 issues and were
6 evaluated generically in the generic environmental
7 impact statement. We found in this case as well
8 that there was no new and significant information
9 that was identified for either of these issues.

10 This concludes my remarks. We entertain
11 any questions. I'm sorry, let me, let me continue.
12 I do want to talk about alternatives as well.

13 In Chapter 8 of the draft, we evaluated the
14 potential environmental impacts associated with
15 alternatives to continuing operation of Fort
16 Calhoun Station. In Chapter 8 we evaluated the
17 potential environmental impact associated with the
18 Fort Calhoun Station not operating, this is the
19 no-action alternative. This alternative is a
20 scenario in which the NRC would not renew the
21 operating license of the Fort Calhoun Station, and
22 when the plant ceases operation, OPPD would
23 decommission the facility. We also looked at other
24 alternatives, new electrical power generation from
25 coal-fired, gas-fired plants or a new nuclear

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1 plant, a purchased-power alternative, the
2 application of alternative technologies such as
3 wind, solar, and hydropower, and then a combination
4 of these alternatives.

5 For each of the alternatives we looked at
6 same types of issues that we looked at earlier,
7 such as land use, ecology, socioeconomics,
8 et cetera, the use of the same issues that were
9 looked at for the Fort Calhoun station's 20-year
10 license renewal term. We also looked at delayed
11 return of other existing facilities as well as
12 utility-sponsored conservation. And then we looked
13 at a combination of those alternatives. And for
14 each alternative we looked at whether the
15 technologies would replace the generating capacity
16 or could replace the generating capacity of the
17 Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1 and whether it would be
18 a feasible alternative to renewal of the current
19 plant's license.

20 The preliminary conclusions were that the
21 alternatives, including the no-action alternative,
22 that is the one in which the license would not be
23 renewed, may have environmental effects, and in at
24 least some of the impact categories, they may reach
25 moderate or a large significance.

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1 This concludes my presentation. I'll be
2 willing to entertain questions.

3 MR. CAMERON: Thank you very much,
4 Ken. Are there any questions for Ken about the
5 findings in the draft report? Okay. Thank you,
6 Ken.

7 As promised, we're going to look at the,
8 what we call SAMA, Significant Accident Mitigation
9 Alternatives, Jack Cushing, and he'll tell you a
10 little bit about the process for submitting
11 comment.

12 MR. CUSHING: Yes. Chapter 5 of the
13 report is entitled "The Environmental Impacts of
14 Postulated Accidents." There are two class of
15 accidents, design-basis accidents and severe
16 accidents.

17 Design-basis accidents are those accidents
18 that both the licensee and the NRC evaluated to
19 ensure that the plant can withstand without undue
20 risk to the public.

21 The environmental impacts or design-basis
22 accidents are evaluated during the initial
23 licensing process. And the ability of the plant to
24 withstand these accidents has to be demonstrated
25 before the plant is granted a license. Most

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1 importantly, the licensee is required to maintain
2 an acceptable design and performance capability
3 throughout the life of the plant, including any
4 extended-life operation. Since the licensee has to
5 demonstrate acceptable plant performance for
6 design-basis accidents throughout the life of the
7 plan, the commission, in the generic environmental
8 impact statement, determined that the environmental
9 impact design-basis are of all small significance
10 because the plant was designed to withstand these
11 accidents. Neither the licensee nor the NRC is
12 aware of any new and significant information on the
13 capability of the plant to withstand design-basis
14 accidents associated with license renewal.
15 Therefore, the staff concludes that there are no
16 impacts related to design-basis accidents beyond
17 those discussed in the generic environmental impact
18 statement.

19 Second category of accidents evaluated in
20 the GEIS are severe accidents. Severe accidents by
21 definition are more severe than design-basis
22 accidents because they could result in substantial
23 damage to the reactor core. The commission found
24 in the generic environmental impact statement that
25 the consequences for severe accidents are small for

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1 all plants. Nevertheless, the commission
2 determined that alternatives to mitigate severe
3 accidents must be considered for all plants that
4 have not done so. We refer to those alternatives
5 as severe accident mitigation alternatives, or
6 SAMA, for short.

7 The SAMA review for Fort Calhoun Station is
8 contained in Section 5.2 of the environmental
9 impact statement. The purpose of doing a SAMA
10 evaluation is to ensure that the plant changes with
11 the potential for improving severe accidents safety
12 performance are identified and evaluated. Scope of
13 the potential improvements that were considered
14 included hardware modification, procedure changes,
15 training program improvements, basically a full
16 spectrum of potential changes. The scope included
17 SAMAs that would prevent core damage, as well as
18 SAMAs that improve containment performance.

19 For the SAMA analysis we first quantify
20 overall plant risk. Secondly, identify potential
21 improvements, and then quantify the risk reduction
22 potential in the implementation cause for each
23 improvement, and finally determine if
24 implementation is justified.

25 In determining whether an improvement is

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1 justified, the NRC staff looks at three factors.
2 First is whether the improvement is cost
3 beneficial, in other words, is the estimated
4 benefit greater than the estimated implementation
5 costs of the SAMA. Second factor is whether the
6 improvement provides a significant reduction in
7 total risk. The third factor is whether the risk
8 reduction is associated with the aging effects
9 during the period of extended operation, if it was,
10 we would be looking at implementation as part of
11 the license renewal process.

12 The preliminary results of the Fort Calhoun
13 Station SAMA evaluation are summarized in this
14 slide. The end result of the evaluation was that
15 seven SAMAs were found to be cost beneficial. The
16 cost-beneficial SAMAs include procedural and
17 training enhancement in the use of commercially
18 available secondary potential transient.

19 The seven cost-beneficial SAMAs are not
20 required to be implemented at Fort Calhoun Station
21 as part of license renewal because they do not
22 relate to managing the effects of aging. However,
23 OPPD currently plans to implement the seven
24 cost-beneficial SAMAs.

25 Turning now to our overall conclusions. We

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1 found that the impacts of license renewal are small
2 in all impact areas. We also concluded that the
3 alternatives, including the no-action alternatives,
4 may have environmental effects in at least some
5 impact categories that reach moderate or large
6 significance. Based on these results, our
7 preliminary recommendation is that the adverse
8 environmental impacts of license renewal for Fort
9 Calhoun Station are not so great that preserving
10 the option of license renewal for energy planning
11 decisionmakers would be unreasonable.

12 A quick recap of our current status. We
13 issued the draft environmental impact statement for
14 the Fort Calhoun license renewal on January 6th.
15 We are currently in the middle of a public comment
16 period that is scheduled to end on April 10th. We
17 expect to address the public comments, including
18 any necessary revisions, to the environmental
19 impact statement and issue a final environmental
20 impact statement in August.

21 This slide is to provide information on
22 how to access the draft environmental impact
23 statement. You can contact me directly at the
24 phone number provided. There are a number of
25 copies out in the lobby, and you can pick one up on

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1 your way out. In addition, the Blair and the Clark
2 public libraries have copies for you to look at,
3 and the document is available on the Web at the
4 address given.

5 This slide gives details on how to submit
6 comments on the draft. Comment period, as I said
7 before, goes until April 10th, 2003. You can
8 submit comments by writing directly to the address
9 given and you can send them to the e-mail address
10 here, Ft_Calhoun_EIS@nrc.gov, or can you bring them
11 in person to our headquarters in Rockville. Thank
12 you.

13 Are there any comments?

14 MR. CAMERON: Any questions? Yes.

15 MR. MASNIK: Underline.

16 MR. CUSHING: Oh, yes. On the
17 e-mail address there's an underscore between Fort
18 Calhoun and -- between Fort and Calhoun and between
19 Calhoun and EIS. So when you're using the e-mail
20 address, be sure to use the underscore.

21 MR. CAMERON: And, Jack, one thing
22 people might be interested in, you can go onto the
23 NRC website to look at the draft environmental
24 impact statement, as I think you mentioned. Will
25 we also be putting comments that people submit on

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1 the environmental impact statement? If someone
2 wants to see what someone else said or when we're
3 reviewing those comments, will those comments be on
4 the website?

5 MR. CUSHING: No, those comments
6 aren't on our website. Where we do collect the
7 comments is in the final environmental impact
8 statement and we do include them as an appendix to
9 the final environmental impact statement.

10 MR. CAMERON: Okay. Let's go to
11 Mike Masnik for clarification.

12 MR. MASNIK: Also, that all comments
13 are docketed, so they would be in ADAMS. So a
14 person could actually access those comments through
15 our ADAMS documents.

16 MR. CAMERON: Okay. Good. And if
17 anybody wants to know how to -- the process for
18 using ADAMS, they could contact Jack.

19 MR. CUSHING: Contact me, and our
20 website also has guidance on how to use ADAMS as
21 well.

22 DR. ZAHN: There's an instructional
23 sheet at the front table as well.

24 MR. CAMERON: And there's
25 information about that?

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1 DR. ZAHN: On ADAMS.

2 MR. CAMERON: Okay. Thank you very
3 much. Now it's time to -- thank you, Jack.

4 MR. CUSHING: Thank you.

5 MR. CAMERON: Time to hear from
6 anybody who wants to make a public comment. We
7 only have one person signed up formally now. If
8 anybody else wants to make a public comment, please
9 feel free to do so. And we have Gary Gates, who is
10 the vice president for nuclear programs, I believe,
11 at Omaha Public Power District. Gary.

12 MR. GATES: As stated, my name is
13 Gary Gates. I'm vice president that is responsible
14 for the operation of Fort Calhoun Station. I'd
15 also like to acknowledge many of the OPPD staff
16 that are here today that have worked hard with the
17 NRC on providing information on our application.
18 And a special acknowledgment to Director Anne
19 McGuire who is a member of our board of directors
20 and in particular is in charge of the, and chair of
21 the Nuclear Oversight Committee of our board which
22 monitors our performance.

23 I spoke to you in June, at the June meeting
24 in Omaha concerning our license renewal
25 application, I welcome the opportunity to do so

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1 again today in support of the preliminary
2 conclusions of the NRC staff that there are no
3 environmental impacts to preclude renewal of the
4 operating license for Fort Calhoun Station.

5 OPPD provides electricity to more than
6 300,000 customers in a 13-county area in southeast
7 Nebraska. It must be noted that 30 percent of this
8 generation for those customers is generated at the
9 Fort Calhoun Station. Fort Calhoun's a single unit
10 plant located between Blair and Fort Calhoun and
11 was declared operational and commercial in 1973,
12 and has been operating safely since then. I am
13 proud to have been a part of that operation of Fort
14 Calhoun since the initial construction.

15 We feel that over the last 30 years we have
16 demonstrated a high level of safety and
17 environmental stewardship with all of our programs
18 and operations. In fact, the continued safe
19 operation of Fort Calhoun Station remains the
20 number one priority at OPPD. OPPD maintains its
21 facilities and conducts its operation based on a
22 strong commitment to environmental monitoring and
23 management. Our policy is to conduct operations,
24 not just in compliance with all applicable
25 government laws and regulations, but over and

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1 beyond minimum requirements for those regulations.
2 This ensures our ability to protect the environment
3 and to serve in the best interest of our employees,
4 our customers, and surrounding community.

5 We feel the NRC staff recommendation, which
6 the subject of today's meetings, is a testament to
7 the effectiveness of that approach. OPPD will
8 continue what we believe is a comprehensive
9 environmental monitoring program, hopefully for an
10 additional 20 years of operation from 2013.

11 Furthermore, we will continue to develop
12 and implement ways to further minimize the risks
13 associated with operation of a nuclear plant. In
14 other words, we are committed to conducting our
15 operations in an environmentally responsible manner
16 as we have done for the last 30 years.

17 Let me take a few minutes to say something
18 about the employees who work at Fort Calhoun
19 nuclear station. These men and women take pride in
20 their ability to safely operate a clean, dependable
21 source or power. They do so not only as workers,
22 but as residents of the areas they serve. Besides
23 having homes and families, they are valued members
24 of the community, and they often serve as
25 volunteers and social leaders in the community in

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1 which we live. They also know that the effective
2 operation of Fort Calhoun Station for another 20
3 years will contribute to the continued economic
4 benefits to the area. That includes jobs not only
5 for our plant employees, but for many of the area
6 businesses with whom we work.

7 The point is that we have a stake in
8 continuing to operate the plant in a safe manner
9 and a strong environmental manner.

10 One other note, OPPD's concern for
11 environment goes beyond Fort Calhoun Station. We
12 have invested in other clean sources of power such
13 as wind and biomass.

14 In closing, let me thank you for this
15 opportunity to speak on this very important issue
16 in support of the staff's recommendation. Thank
17 you for your time.

18 MR. CAMERON: Thank you. Thank you,
19 Gary.

20 Is there anybody else who wants to make a
21 statement, provide a comment at this point or ask a
22 question? Okay. I think we probably could adjourn
23 at this point, and we're going to be back at seven
24 o'clock for another public meeting and an open
25 house at six o'clock before that meeting. And

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1 thank all of you for attending.

2 (The proceedings were concluded at the
3 hour of 2:35 p.m.)

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