



December 15, 2003

Document Control Desk
Attention: P. T. Kuo
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint
Washington, District of Columbia 20555

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Recently, I learned that the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant in Ashford, operated by Southern Nuclear Operating Company, is filing a license renewal application. I strongly endorse the renewal of this exemplary plant's operating license. Plant Farley is an irreplaceable asset to our community, state, and southeastern portion of our nation.

Plant Farley has a tremendous impact upon the local and state economy. It employs more than 900 people and provides upwards of \$7 million in tax revenues. Such revenues provide a basis for support of many local initiatives and services, especially public schools throughout the area. With the current crisis in public education funding within the state of Alabama, many of our local schools would suffer extensive budget shortfalls without the tax income generated by Plant Farley. In addition, the plant raises a large amount of money for local charities, non-profit organizations, and local educational institutions (House of Ruth home for abused women, United Way, Troy State University Dothan, many local schools, Santa's Elves Project, Habitat for Humanity, etc.) through its local Chapter of the Alabama Power Service Organization. It is vital to the economic well being of our local economy for Plant Farley to continue to operate over the next twenty years.

It has been my privilege to have a close association with Plant Farley over the past twenty years. As a long-time member of the educational community, I have worked on a large number of projects in which Farley played a critical role. Through workshops, seminars, in-school presentations, fund-raising efforts, teacher education projects, and many other avenues, the plant has consistently worked to better educate our children as well as adults. Indeed, several of my students selected engineering, chemistry, physics or technology as their vocation after being exposed to such fields in one or more of Farley's educational projects.

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Farley sets and maintains the highest standards in the nuclear power industry. The plant has one of the highest safety ratings and histories in the nation. Farley employees are highly qualified, competent, well trained and committed to excellence. Recent developments in the arena of terrorism and safety have been of great concern to Farley and they have developed and implemented strict procedures regarding site security, training, and safety.

Plant Farley also plays an active role in environmental protection. It constantly monitors key factors in the local biome, both on-site and off. Through wildlife and land management efforts, the plant site has been designated as a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Plant Farley employees work with a large number of area schools promoting ecology and the environment through projects such as blue bird nesting box programs.

Perhaps the most significant reason for license renewal is that Plant Farley provides us with a safe, dependable, affordable, and clean source of electrical power. It offers us an alternative to inefficient coal-fired plants which produce tons of harmful emissions and petroleum based plants which, again, produce emissions and are dependent upon limited petroleum supplies. With the current situation in the Middle East, no one can make reliable predictions regarding the price and/or availability of petroleum over the next 20 years. It is vital to our nation that we have reliable sources of electrical power in place – Farley is such a source.

Plant Farley has an exemplary record of safety and service since its establishment in 1977. Past and present levels of performance and reliability speak strongly for the continuance of operations at Farley. I urge you to approve license renewal for Plant Farley. It is an asset that our community, state, and nation cannot afford to lose. Should you need additional information or have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Mashburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Steven E. Mashburn
Adjunct Professor of Biology