

February 27, 2004

Dr. Roy Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR A LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE AREA
UNDER EVALUATION FOR THE BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT
LICENSE RENEWAL

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for the renewal of the operating licenses for Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant Units 1, 2, and 3 (BFN). BFN is located in Limestone County, Alabama, 16 km (10 mi) southwest of Athens, Alabama. As part of the review of the license renewal application, the NRC is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) under the provision of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, which includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended.

The proposed action would include the use and continued maintenance of existing plant facilities and transmission lines and would not result in significant new construction or disturbance. Any maintenance activities would be limited to previously disturbed areas. For the specific purpose of connecting BFN to the regional transmission system, there are seven 500-kilovolt (kV) lines and two 161-kV lines. These transmission line corridors are being evaluated as part of the SEIS process. The transmission line corridors traverse Limestone, Morgan, Lawrence, Franklin, and Colbert counties in Alabama; and Union, Lee, Tishomingo, and Itawamba counties in Mississippi. The site boundary and transmission lines are identified in Enclosures 1 and 2. The site boundary and transmission line corridors can also be viewed at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/browns-ferry/env-bfn-2.pdf> the NRC's web site on pages E-70 and E-388, respectively.

The plant uses an open-cycle cooling system to dissipate waste heat to the environment. Cooling water is drawn from Wheeler Reservoir on the Tennessee River into the turbine-generator condensers and discharging it back to the reservoir via large submerged diffuser pipes that are perforated to maximize uniform mixing into the flowstream. Mechanical draft helper cooling towers are also used in the summer to reduce the heat load to the reservoir.

To support the environmental impact statement preparation process and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the NRC requests a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in

the vicinity of BFN and its associated transmission lines. The NRC has requested the same information and list of species from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On March 30-31, 2004, the NRC plans to conduct a site audit at the BFN site. In addition, we plan to hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on April 1, 2004, at the Athens State University Student Center Cafeteria Ballroom, 300 Beaty Street, Athens, Alabama 35611-1999. Your staff is invited to attend both the site audit and the public meetings. Additional information on these activities will be forwarded to Mr. David Bernhart of your staff. The NRC staff will also forward to your office a copy of the draft SEIS along with a request for comments.

If you have any questions concerning BFN, the license renewal application, or other aspects of this project, please contact Dr. Michael Masnik, Senior Environmental Project Manager, at (301) 415-1191 or by e-mail at mtm2@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos.: 50-259, 50-260, and 50-296

cc: See next page

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BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT

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