March 23, 2004

The Honorable Gregory E. Pyle, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Drawer 1210
Durant, OK 74702

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION REVIEW OF THE BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Dear Chief Pyle:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is seeking input for its environmental review of an application from Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to renew its operating licenses for the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Units 1, 2, and 3 (BFN), located in Limestone County, Alabama, 16 km (10 mi) southwest of Athens, Alabama. BFN is in close proximity to lands that may be of interest to the Choctaw Nation Tribe. As described below, the NRC process includes an opportunity for public participation in the environmental review. We want to ensure that you are aware of our efforts and, pursuant to 10 CFR 51.28(b), the NRC invites the Choctaw Nation Tribal Community to provide input to the scoping process relating to the NRC's environmental review of the application.

The NRC will hold public scoping meetings for the BFN license renewal supplement to the NRC's "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants" (GEIS) (NUREG-1437). These scoping meetings will be held at the Athens State University, Student Center Cafeteria Ballroom, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, Alabama, on Thursday, April 1, 2004. There will be two sessions to accommodate interested parties. The first session will convene at 1:30 p.m. and will continue until 4:30 p.m., as necessary. The second session will convene at 7:00 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the meeting, and will continue until 10:00 p.m., as necessary. Additionally, the NRC staff will host informal discussions one hour before the start of each session. No formal comments on the proposed scope of the supplement to the GEIS will be accepted during the informal discussions. To be considered, comments must be provided either at the transcribed public meetings or in writing. The application and the environmental review process are described below.

Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating licenses for BFN will expire in 2013, 2014, and 2016 respectively. TVA submitted an environmental report as part of its application for renewal of the BFN operating license on January 6, 2004. The application is electronically available for inspection from the Publicly Available Records (PARs) component of NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html, which provides access through the NRC's Public Electronic Reading Room (PERR) link. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) Reference staff at 1 (800) 397-4209, (301) 415-4737, or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov. In addition, the application can be viewed on the Internet at

http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications.html.

A paper copy of the document can be viewed at the NRC's PDR, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland, 20852-2738 and at the Athens-Limestone Public Library, 405 East South Street, Athens, Alabama, 35611-1999. Also, the GEIS assesses the scope and impact of environmental effects that would be associated with license renewal at any nuclear power plant site. A copy of this document can also be found on the NRC's website or at the NRC's PDR.

The NRC is gathering information for the document that will be a BFN-specific supplement to the GEIS. The supplement will contain the results of the review of the environmental impacts on the area surrounding the BFN site that are related to terrestrial ecology, aquatic ecology, hydrology, cultural resources, and socioeconomic issues (among others) and will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability of the license renewal action.

Please submit any written comments the Choctaw Nation Tribal Community may have to offer on the scope of the environmental review by April 26, 2004. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, or by e-mail to BrownsFerryEIS@nrc.gov.

At the conclusion of the scoping process, the NRC staff will prepare a summary of the significant issues identified, the conclusions reached, and will mail a copy to you.

The NRC will prepare a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for public comment, and will hold another set of public meetings in the site vicinity to solicit comments on the draft. A copy of the draft SEIS will be sent to you for your review and comment. After consideration of public comments received on the draft, the NRC will prepare a final SEIS. If you need additional information regarding the environmental review process, please contact Dr. Michael Masnik, Senior Environmental Project Manager, at (301) 415-1191.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**
Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program
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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