



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802- 4213

JUL 20 2005

151401SWR2004PR13815:JSK

Mr. Pao-Tsin Kuo
Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Kuo:

This letter acknowledges that NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is in receipt of your letter dated May 20, 2005, requesting initiation of a formal section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The consultation concerns the possible effects of continued operation of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station's (SONGS) Cooling Water System and Salt Water Cooling System on ESA-listed species managed by NMFS. SONGS is operated by Southern California Edison under licenses issued and administered by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The potential impacts of plant operations on ESA-listed species were not considered during the original environmental review and licensing of SONGS Units 2 and 3.

The information required to initiate formal section 7 consultation was provided in the Biological Assessment (BA) prepared by NRC and submitted with your letter. The BA contained sufficient information to initiate consultation, although some additional information may be required by NMFS to complete the consultation. Additional information requests will be handled by Jessica Kondel of my staff.

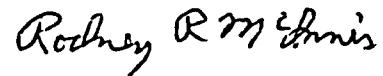
Section 7 allows NMFS up to 90 days to conclude formal consultation with your agency and an additional 45 calendar days to prepare our biological opinion, unless we mutually agree to an extension. Therefore, we expect to provide you with our biological opinion no later than November 30, 2005.

As a reminder, the ESA requires that after initiation of formal consultation, the Federal action agency may not make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that limit future options. This practice insures agency actions do not preclude the formulation or implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives that avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of endangered or threatened species or destroying or modifying their critical habitats.



If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process, please contact Jessica Kondel at (562) 980-3230 or Jessica.Kondel@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rodney R. McInnis".

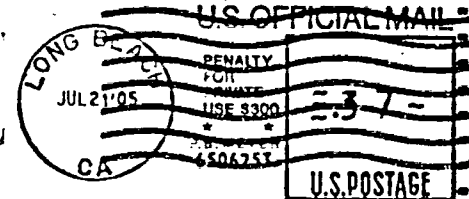
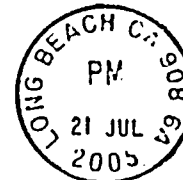
Rodney R. McInnis
Regional Administrator

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NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
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Handwritten: Kuo: Pao-Tsin Kuo
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