

February 1, 2006

Dr. Graham B. Wallis, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION FOR THE GRAND GULF SITE AND THE ASSOCIATED FINAL SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT

Dear Chairman Wallis:

Thank you for your letter dated December 23, 2005, regarding the final safety evaluation report (FSER) of the System Energy Resources, Inc. (SERI), application for the Grand Gulf early site permit (ESP). The staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will reproduce your letter as Appendix E to the FSER for the Grand Gulf ESP which will be issued as a final NRC technical report in an upcoming NUREG. In your letter, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) agreed with the staff's proposed permit conditions, but expressed concern over some of the staff's conclusions associated with the nature of the proposed site.

Specifically, your letter stated that the technical basis for the staff's conclusion on its analyses of the hazards posed to the proposed site by explosions in transportation accidents on the Mississippi River needed to be more explicit. The staff has noted the ACRS concern and has asked the applicant to provide additional information to demonstrate how it meets Regulatory Guide (RG) 1.91, "Evaluations of Explosions Postulated to Occur on Transportation Routes Near Nuclear Power Plants." The staff's evaluation of this information will be documented in the NUREG. Prior to issuance of the NUREG, the staff plans to inform the ACRS of the proposed changes.

Lastly, ACRS recommended that the staff provide additional guidance to applicants concerning "Major Features" of emergency planning for a proposed site. The staff agrees with the ACRS recommendation and is working to establish additional guidance, which will be included in a revision of Supplement 2 to NUREG-0654/FEMA-REP-1. It is the staff's understanding that industry does not plan to submit a "Major Features" ESP application in the near future and therefore the priority for this work is considered low. Currently, the staff's focus is on activities related to updating the emergency planning sections of the standard review plan and creation of guidance for future combined license applicants.

G. Wallis

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The NRC staff appreciates the insights that the ACRS has provided concerning the safety review of the Grand Gulf ESP. These insights are a valuable contribution to the NRC staff's review and development of the FSER.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
Commissioner Jaczko
Commissioner Lyons
SECY

G. Wallis

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