

May 15, 2006

Mr. Pace Wilber
Atlantic Branch Supervisor, Fishery Biologist
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
Charleston Field Office (LR/SER 45)
217 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29412-9110

SUBJECT: ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF
BRUNSWICK STEAM ELECTRIC PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

Dear Mr. Wilber:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has prepared the enclosed essential fish habitat (EFH) assessment to determine if the proposed renewal of the Brunswick Steam Electric Plant, Units 1 and 2 (BSEP), operating licenses for a period of an additional 20 years would adversely affect any designated EFH. The proposed action is not a major construction activity. BSEP is located in Brunswick County in southeastern North Carolina, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

The NRC staff's assessment considers the impacts of BSEP operation on the EFH of species managed by the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. For each species, impacts on the EFH of potentially occurring life stages are evaluated, along with habitat areas of particular concern, where designated.

The NRC staff concludes that the continued operation of the BSEP for an additional 20 years (if authorized) would have a minimal adverse effect on EFH.

In preparing our assessment and reaching our conclusion, the NRC staff relied on information provided by the licensee, on literature research, on interviews conducted by NRC staff with experts, and on information from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office. We look forward to your comments on our assessment.

P. Wilber

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If you have any questions regarding this assessment or the staff's request, please contact Alicia Williamson, Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-1878 or by e-mail at arw1@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Frank P. Gillespie, Director
Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-324 and 50-325

Enclosure:
Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

cc w/encl: See next page

P. Wilber

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Enclosure:
Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

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ADAMS Accession Number: **ML061350331**

Document name: E:\Filenet\ML061350331.wpd *See previous concurrence

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Brunswick Steam Electric Plant, Units 1 and 2

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