

August 29, 2007

Mr. David Lochbaum
Director, Nuclear Safety Project
Union of Concerned Scientists
1707 H Street NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006-3919

Dear Mr. Lochbaum:

I am responding to your letter of May 17, 2007, in which you raised an issue regarding the term of a license that could be issued for the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant (WBN) Unit 2. Your letter references a Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) letter dated April 3, 2007, which described key assumptions TVA was using in its assessment of whether to complete WBN Unit 2. Your letter suggested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) should consider the effect of the time of operation of equipment common to both WBN Units 1 and 2 that has been supporting WBN Unit 1 operations in determination of the WBN Unit 2 license term.

The NRC does not rely upon the term of an operating license to ensure adequate equipment performance over the life of a power reactor, relying instead upon design and operation in accordance with the regulations, verified by the NRC's inspection program, to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety. The regulations contained in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations provide the regulatory requirements necessary to ensure components perform satisfactorily in service. TVA's operating license application must address these requirements, including a description of the maintenance and monitoring programs that preserve licensing and design basis functional capability. These programs include inservice testing and inspection, quality assurance, technical specification surveillance requirements, programs for identification, and repair or replacement of degraded components, and implementation of the maintenance rule. The NRC's review of TVA's application will ensure the facility design and programs meet regulatory requirements. NRC inspections will verify plant equipment remains capable of safely supporting operation of WBN Units 1 and 2 over the full term of their respective operating licenses.

Please contact me at (301)415-1470 or at jfw1@nrc.gov if you have additional questions on this matter.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Joseph F. Williams, Senior Project Manager
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Joseph F. Williams, Senior Project Manager
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