



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 7, 1995

Mr. John Johnson  
P.O. Box 281  
Chattanooga, TN 37401

SUBJECT: OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO VOICE COMMENTS ON WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT (TAC NO. M72494)

Dear Mr. Johnson:

By letter dated March 15, 1995, to William Russell, Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, you requested an opportunity for interested members of the public to ask questions of the NRC regarding the status of the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant.

You stated that the public has not had an opportunity to comment on Watts Bar and safety related issues for over twenty years. By letter to Stephen A. Smith dated August 11, 1993 (copy enclosed), Edwin J. Reis of the NRC Office of the General Counsel explained the opportunity for members of the public to comment on various aspects of a nuclear power plant.

The Commission's Policy Statement on Staff Meetings Open to the Public (current version dated September 20, 1994), and NRC Handbook 3.5 specify that the public may participate in public meetings to observe, speak and ask questions of the NRC staff. The NRC's policy regarding opening meetings to the public balances competing interests: the need for the NRC and the utility to exchange technical information, and the right of the public to observe that process. One of the Commission's major efforts in recent years has been to open meetings to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the concern for exchanging technical information. The NRC staff member in charge of the meeting may, at his or her discretion, accept questions from observers after the formal agenda is completed. After the meeting, observers may supply any information they believe relevant to the NRC, or they may submit comments on the information presented at the meeting to the NRC staff. While the NRC welcomes public involvement, it has been our experience that this meeting format, as opposed to an 'open dialogue format,' is the most practical one to exchange technical information.

Most of the staff's meetings with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) have been public and were, therefore, open to members of the public to participate. Similarly, members of the public may participate in the manner stated above during the April 12, 1995 meeting.

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J. Johnson

- 2 -

In addition, the staff has met with members of the public to specifically receive their comments and concerns. For example, the staff held a formal meeting on November 9, 1993; and on January 10, 1995 the staff held a public meeting to discuss the draft supplement to the Final Environmental Statement for Watts Bar.

Finally, you expressed concern about QA/QC issues at Watts Bar. The staff has likewise expressed such concerns (e.g., in a letter to TVA dated December 22, 1994). The staff will not issue an operating license to Watts Bar until such issues are resolved.

If I can be of further assistance or if you would like to participate in the meeting on April 12th, please call me at (301) 415-2024.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Peter S. Tam  
for  
Frederick J. Hebdon, Director  
Project Directorate II-3  
Division of Reactor Projects I/II  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-390

Enclosure: E. Reis letter to S. Smith  
dated August 11, 1993

cc w/enclosure: See next page

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