

50-390/391



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

July 24, 1995

Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
Environmental Policy Section
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
345 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30365

Dear Mr. Mueller:

We received your June 15, 1995, letter that commented on the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant Final Environmental Statement (FES) Supplement. Your letter identifies two issues that you believe were inadequately addressed in the FES Supplement: Project Need and Pollution Prevention.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) decision to prepare the Watts Bar FES Supplement was not made as a result of identifying any new or more severe environmental impacts since the 1978 Watts Bar FES, but rather for the purpose of furthering the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The focus of the Watts Bar FES Supplement was to discuss changes in environmental impacts, previously described in the Watts Bar FES, that have occurred as a result of observed changes in the environment or changes in the design or proposed methods of operation of the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant. Given the reason for preparing the FES Supplement and the focus of the supplement, the NRC staff believes that these issues were appropriately addressed in the supplement.

As stated in your June 15, 1995, letter, it is NRC's standard policy not to revisit need for power in a supplement. Need for power was considered in the FES prepared at the time of construction and our regulations, which implement the Counsel on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, do not require need for power to be reevaluated in supplements.

In the CEQ guidance to Federal agencies on incorporating pollution prevention principals in their decision making process and evaluating and reporting those efforts in documents prepared pursuant to NEPA (58 FR 6478), it appears that the CEQ intended for Federal agencies to consider pollution prevention measures and report them in their NEPA documents. It is the NRC staff's position that this was done in the Watts Bar FES Supplement. In the guidance provided, the CEQ uses the term pollution prevention as reducing or eliminating hazardous or other polluting inputs; and instructs agencies to consider and report modifications in manufacturing, maintenance, design, and other industrial practices to reduce or eliminate polluting inputs. The Watts Bar FES Supplement describes areas where changes in the design and proposed methods of operation of the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant have resulted in reduced use of hazardous chemicals and also in a reduced volume of radioactive waste for disposal.

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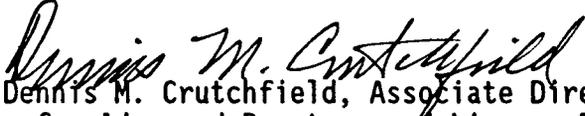
Heinz J. Mueller

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July 24, 1995

The NRC will continue to prepare NEPA documents that address pollution prevention and need for power, where applicable.

Sincerely,


Dennis M. Crutchfield, Associate Director
for Advanced Reactors and License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

July 24, 1995

The NRC will continue to prepare NEPA documents that address pollution prevention and need for power, where applicable.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Dennis M. Crutchfield, Associate Director
for Advanced Reactors and License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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