

March 11, 2008

Mr. David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR COMBINED LICENSES FOR THE BELLEFONTE
NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 3 AND 4

Dear Mr. Bernhart:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for combined licenses (COLs) for construction and operation of two new commercial nuclear power reactors at its Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Site near Scottsboro, Alabama. As part of the review of this COL application, the NRC is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as required by Title 10, Part 51 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the NRC's regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The EIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1996, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1934.

The Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Site consists of approximately 1600 acres on a peninsula from Tennessee River Mile 390 to River Mile 393 in Jackson County, Alabama on the western shore of Guntersville Reservoir, approximately 7 miles northeast of Scottsboro, Alabama. Currently, two partially completed pressurized water reactors, which do not produce power, occupy the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Site. TVA plans to construct two new nuclear units adjacent to the existing site. TVA also has identified four alternative sites that will be evaluated in the EIS. The NRC staff will evaluate the environmental impacts of construction and operation of the two proposed nuclear units and will also consider alternatives to the proposed action including evaluation of the alternative sites in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.14. TVA submitted the application for COL on October 30, 2007, pursuant to NRC requirements at 10 CFR Part 52. The application was accepted for docketing on January 18, 2008, and is available through the web-based version of the NRC's Agency-wide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) which can be found at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The application is listed under Accession Number ML073110527. The Bellefonte COL application is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/col/bellefonte.html>.

To support the EIS preparation process and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the ESA of 1973, the NRC requests a list of endangered, threatened, candidate and proposed species, and designated and proposed critical habitat under the jurisdiction of National Marine Fisheries

Service (NMFS) that may be in the vicinity of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant Site. In support of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the NRC also requests a list of species that have designated essential fish habitat in the vicinity of the Bellefonte Site. In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the FWCA of 1934.

The NRC staff plans to hold two public scoping meetings on April 3, at the Scottsboro Goosepond Civic Center, 1165 Ed Hembree Drive, Scottsboro, AL 35768. The first meeting will convene at 1:30 p.m., and will continue until 4:30 p.m., as necessary. The second meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the first meeting, and will continue until 10:00 p.m., as necessary. Each meeting will be preceded by an open house from 12:30pm to 1:30pm, and 6:00pm to 7:00pm, respectively, during which members of the public may meet and talk with NRC staff members on an informal basis. You and your staff are invited to attend. Your office will receive a copy of the draft EIS along with a request for comments after it is issued. The anticipated publication date for the draft EIS is March 2009.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Mallecia Hood, the Environmental Project Manager for the Bellefonte Project at (301) 415-0673 or by e-mail at mah2@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William Burton, Branch Chief
Environment Projects Branch 1
Division of Site and Environmental Reviews
Office of New Reactors

Docket Nos: 52-014 and 52-015

cc: See next page

D. Bernhart

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William Burton, Branch Chief
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(Revised 01/23/08)

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