

June 19, 2008

Ms. Julie Holling  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Heritage Trust Program  
1000 Assembly Street  
Columbia, SC 29202

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SCOPING PROCESS AND LIST OF RARE, THREATENED, OR ENDANGERED SPECIES FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR THE WILLIAM STATES LEE III UNITS 1 AND 2 COMBINED LICENSE APPLICATION

Dear Ms. Holling:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (Duke) for a combined license (COL) for the construction and operation of two new commercial nuclear power reactors at its William States Lee III (Lee) site in Gaffney, South Carolina. As part of the review of this COL application, the NRC is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as required by Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Part 51, the NRC's regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). The EIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is intended to fulfill consultation requirements as required by the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended (FWCA).

Duke submitted the application for the COL on December 13, 2007, pursuant to NRC requirements of 10 CFR Part 52. The application was accepted for docketing on February 25, 2008, and is available on the public website and through the web-based version of the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), which can be found at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The application is listed in ADAMS under the accession number ML073510876. The Lee COL application is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/col/lee.html>.

The Lee site is located on approximately 1900 acres in the eastern portion of Cherokee County in north central South Carolina approximately 7.5 miles southeast of Gaffney, South Carolina, on the west side of the Broad River, just upstream from the Ninety-Nine Islands Hydroelectric Plant. Duke Power Company partially constructed the proposed Cherokee Nuclear Station on this site between 1977 and 1982. Duke plans to construct two new nuclear units at the existing site. Construction and operation of the proposed Lee Nuclear Station would be within the previously disturbed, large, open, and contiguous 750 acres of land previously cleared for construction activities. Currently, this land consists of open, partially developed industrial land with low groundcover vegetation and scattered areas of sparse tree growth. The aquatic environs are dominated by the Ninety-Nine Islands Reservoir (Broad River). Two proposed transmission line rights-of-way are planned for the Lee Nuclear Station. Modification of existing transmission lines to carry additional power load from the plant may be required. Final selection

of the routes is subject to review and approval by the Public Service Commission of South Carolina.

Duke plans to use mechanical draft cooling towers to remove waste heat during power operation for the proposed Units 1 and 2. Makeup water for these units is planned to be withdrawn from the Ninety-Nine Islands Reservoir (Broad River) through the river water intake structure. At times of low river flow in the Broad River, water will be withdrawn from onsite ponds to augment makeup water. The applicant's preferred location for the new units would be adjacent to the existing, partially constructed Cherokee Nuclear Station in Cherokee County, South Carolina. The siting area for the transmission lines also includes York and Union Counties of South Carolina. The three alternative sites to be evaluated in the EIS are located in Oconee and Anderson Counties in South Carolina and Davie County, North Carolina.

To support the EIS preparation process, the NRC requests information on state listed, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of the Lee site and the associated transmission line rights-of-way, located in York, Cherokee, and Union Counties. In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the FWCA. Your office will receive a copy of the draft EIS along with a request for comments. The anticipated publication date for the draft EIS is May 2009.

If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff's environmental review of this COL application, please contact Ms. Linda Tello, Environmental Project Manager, at (301) 415-2907 or at [Linda.Tello@nrc.gov](mailto:Linda.Tello@nrc.gov) or Ms. Jessie Muir at (301) 415-0491 or at [Jessie.Muir@nrc.gov](mailto:Jessie.Muir@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Richard P. Raione, Branch Chief  
Environmental Projects Branch 2  
Division of Site and Environmental Reviews  
Office of New Reactors

Docket Nos.: 52-018 and 52-019

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