U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO THE GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF

VOGTLE ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT

UNITS 1 AND 2

WAYNESBORO, GEORGIA

PUBLIC MEETING

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday,

June 3, 2008

Auditorium, Waynesboro Campus

Augusta Technical College

216 Highway 24 South

Waynesboro, Georgia

PRESIDING:

DONNIE ASHLEY, Facilitator

ALSO PRESENT:

J.P. LEOUS, Environmental Project Manager,
Division of License Renewal
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ANDREW CARRERA, Health Physicist (Radiation),
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ERIC BENNER, Branch Chief,
Environmental Review, License Renewals
ROGER HANNAH, Atlanta Regional Office
MARK NOTICH, Environmental Project Manager,
Office of New Reactors
DENNIS BEISSLE, Hydrology and Water Use Issues
LOUIS BLAKE, Caudle JULIAN Regional Inspection
Team, Region II

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ASHLEY: Good afternoon to you, again. My name is Donnie Ashley, and I'm the senior projects manager at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. It is my pleasure today to serve as the facilitator for this meeting.

Today we're here to discuss and to receive your comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statements for the renewal of the license of the Vogtle Electric Generating Plants, Units 1 and 2.

This draft supplemental environmental impact statement, or the DSEIS, as we'll refer to it, is the 34th supplement to the generic environmental impact statement license renewal of nuclear power plants, otherwise known as NUREG 1436.

Before we begin the presentation, I'm going to take a moment to let you know what to expect from today's meeting, and as well, we'll just go over a few ground rules.

During this meeting, you may occasionally hear us use acronyms; we're going to try to avoid that if we can, but unfortunately we slip and say things like DSEIS without telling you what it is. So we'll try to hold that to a minimum. If there is a term that you don't understand, or if there's a term that we use that's a

little foreign to you, then let us know; we'll clarify that for you.

We're going to start off the program today with a presentation by J.P. Leous. J.P. is over here. J.P. is the Environmental Project Manager at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He's been with the agency for approximately a year and a half, working on environmental reviews and working directly with me on the safety side of the review of Vogtle's application.

Although he's a young guy, he brings a great deal of experience and diverse experience to the agency, including work with the Peace Corps and studies in Europe. J.P.'s master's degree is in Environmental Policy through Columbia University, and it's been a pleasure to work with J.P. on this project.

Once he's finished his presentation, specifically on the results on the environmental review and how to submit your comments that you'll have on the draft DSEIS, we're going to answer your questions and of course give you an opportunity to provide comments back to the agency.

We have several individuals who have specifically signed up to speak, and we will hear from those individuals first. So if you did not fill out one

of the yellow cards -- I think that's the ones we're going to use, the order in which we're going to ask folks to provide their comments -- you will still have an opportunity to speak, but we will take these in the order in which they were received.

We're taking a transcript of today's meeting, which is one of the reasons that I'm using a microphone. Even though we probably have a small enough area to hear, we want to make sure that if you make a comment or question that it gets on the transcript as part of the public record.

I'll be coming around with the microphone for you to ask your question. If you want to make a statement, come up here and make that statement; that will give you time to -- we'll work through that with you.

I'd like to thank Ms. Brenda Thompson of Neal R. Gross & Company for her work in transcribing the meeting, because I know that's a tough job.

The first time you ask a question of us or make a comment, please identify yourself, and if you're representing an organization, please identify that organization as well. I've done that for a while to make sure that your specific comments are attributed to you, and that you're identified correctly in the transcript.

I'm going to ask that only one person speak at a time and that we try to keep the side conversations if we can to a minimum, because this will allow us to get a good clean copy of the transcript.

We also have some other NRC staff here, and I'd like to introduce those folks before we begin, as well. Eric Benner, is the Branch Chief for the Environmental Review of the License Renewals at the NRC; Dennis Beissel is here to answer questions that you have on hydrology and water use issues; Andy Carrera is also going to run the slides for us, is a health physicist at headquarters, and will answer those questions regarding radiation protection; Mark Notich is the Environmental Project Manager, J.P.'s counterpart on new reactors, and will answer your questions concerning new reactors, and Vogtle's applications for additional units.

We had hoped that Jerry McCoy could be here this afternoon; he's the resident inspector at Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, and I don't know how many of you understand about the resident inspector program.

At each of the nuclear power plants across the nation, we have personnel who are assigned to the plants on a full-time basis, and if they're not actually at the plants, they are on 24/7 call to monitor the activities of

the plants and to ensure compliance with the regulations. And obviously, something -- I just called Jerry; he said that he couldn't make it. But I did want to recognize him.

Louis Lake is here from Region II, as well as Caudle Julian, and they are our regional inspection team who are conducting an inspection this week, and -- at Vogtle. Roger Hannah is here also from the regional office in Atlanta.

When you came in, I hope that you got a copy of the slide presentation and a public meeting feedback form. If not, we can get you one, and if you would, following the meeting, if you'd take a moment and fill out the feedback form and give it to us here today, or if you want to go home and think about what you heard here before you wanted to comment on it, fill it out, put it in the mail -- it's postage-free -- and it will get back to us. I think the -- actually it would go to J.P.

If everyone could just take a moment and check that cell phone, make sure you're either on vibrate or silent; and that will minimize the disruption.

If you haven't been to this wonderful facility before, the restrooms are out the door, and two rights and they're on this side of the building. I'd like to thank

Ms. Vicki Garrison and the staff of Augusta Technical College to allow us once again to use this wonderful space. We've been here now several times to use this facility and the folks here at Augusta Tech have just been very good to us; and it works very well for our public meetings.

And with that, I'd like to thank you all in advance for your participation and we look for a productive meeting, and I'll turn things over to J.P.

MR. LEOUS: Thanks, Donnie. I noticed we have latecomers here, so if you didn't have a chance to sign our sign-in sheet when you first walked in, before you leave, if you could do so, that would be great in helping keep our records.

Additionally, if you're interested in receiving a copy of our final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, just note that on that sheet and we'll get one to you.

Additionally, we've set some information back there against the wall on those two tables, including CDs of the document we're going to be talking about tonight; so if you'd like a copy, feel free to take a look.

Also, you'll hear us reference some documents including, as Donnie mentioned, the Generic Environmental

Impact Statement, and we have a copy of that up there; it is our reference, so please leave it here, but you're free to check it out; and some other information on various ways that NRC regulates, you know, the use of nuclear power.

So with that, I thank you all for taking the time to come to this meeting. I hope the information we will provide will help you understand the process we're going through, and what we've done thus far, and the role you can play in helping us make sure that the final Environmental Impact Statement is accurate and complete.

I'd like to start off by briefly going over the agenda, and the purpose of today's meeting.

I'll start off with a brief overview of the license renewal process and then move on to presenting the preliminary findings of our environmental review, which assesses the impact associated with renewing the operating licenses of Vogtle Units 1 and 2.

Then I'll provide some information about the schedule for the remainder of our review, and how you can submit comments in the future. And finally, the most important part of this meeting, receiving comments you may have.

The Atomic Energy Act gives the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission the authority to issue operating licenses to commercial nuclear power plants for a period of up to 40 years. For Plant Vogtle, the licenses for Units 1 and 2 will expire in 2027 and 2029, respectively. Our regulations make provisions for extending plant operations for an additional 20 years. The NRC received Southern Company's application for license renewal of Units 1 and 2 on June 29, 2007.

As part of the NRC's review of that application, we performed an environmental review to look at the impacts of an additional 20 years of operation on the environment. We held meetings here on August 21 of 2007, to discuss the overall license renewal process, including both safety and environmental reviews, and on September 27, 2007, to seek your input regarding the issues we need to evaluate.

Today we are here to present the preliminary results found in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and afterwards, as mentioned, we'll open up the floor to your comments.

This slide illustrates the NRC's environmental review process used to evaluate the impacts of license renewal. This process involves scoping activities, a site audit, and the development of a document called the

Supplement Environmental Impact Statement or, as Donnie mentioned, SEIS.

The draft supplemental EIS, or Environmental Impact Statement, which we published in April 2008, provides the staff's preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts expected during the license renewal period.

Next I would like to give some information on the statute that governs our environmental review: the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, commonly referred to as NEPA. NEPA requires that all federal agencies follow a systematic approach in evaluating potential environmental impacts associated with certain actions.

We at the NRC are required to consider the impacts of the proposed action, which in this case, is the license renewal. We're also required to consider alternatives to the proposed action. The NRC has determined that an EIS will be prepared for any proposed license renewal of a nuclear power plant.

NEPA and our document are disclosure tools. They are specifically structured to involve individuals and groups from outside the NRC; for example, this meeting is intended to facilitate public participation in our

environmental review.

In the mid-1990s, the NRC developed a generic EIS by evaluating the impacts of all operating nuclear power plants across the U.S. The NRC looked at 92 separate impact areas and found that for 69 of those areas, the impacts were the same for all plants with similar features.

The NRC called these Category 1 Issues, and we were able to make generic conclusions that all the impacts on the environment would be small. The NRC was unable to similarly make determinations for the remaining 23 issues, and, as a consequence, the NRC decided that we would prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for each plant to address these remaining 23 issues.

The staff is supplementing that generic EIS with a site-specific EIS that addresses issues specific to Units 1 and 2 at Plant Vogtle. Together, the generic EIS and the supplemental EIS form the staff's analysis of environmental impacts of license renewal at the Vogtle site.

Also, during the review, the NRC staff looks for and evaluates any new and significant information that might call into question the conclusions we reached previously in the generic document. In addition, the

staff searches for new issues not addressed in the generic EIS.

So this is our decision standard for the environmental review, and I'll give you a second to read it. It's kind of legal jargon, but in short, is the license renewal acceptable from an environmental standpoint?

NRC staff uses information from various sources as we conduct an environmental review. We use information received in the environmental report that was submitted as part of Southern Company's license renewal application.

We also conducted an audit in October last year, where we toured the facility, observed the plant systems, and evaluated the interaction of the plant operations with the environment. We talked to the plant personnel and reviewed specific documentation; we also spoke with the federal, state, local officials.

Additionally, we considered the comments received during the public scoping period. All of this information formed the basis of our preliminary conclusions, presented in the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

This slide shows the types of expertise assembled for the Plant Vogtle's environmental review. As

you can see, our diverse staff is made up of biologists, economists, health physicists, among others.

Here we see some of the major impact areas address in our review on Vogtle. And I'll discuss each of these areas in just a few minutes.

So how are impacts quantified? Well, the Generic Environmental Impact Statement defines three impact levels: small, moderate and large. I'm going to use a fish in the Savannah River as a hypothetical example to illustrate how we use these three terms.

So despite prevention measures, the operation of Plant Vogtle may affect fish populations due to the intake structure. If the decrease in fish is so small it cannot be detected in relation to the total population of fish in the Savannah River, the impact would be small.

If losses cause the fish population to decline but to then stabilize at a lower level, the impact would be moderate. If losses cause the fish population to decline to a point where it cannot be stabilized or continually declines, then the impact would be large.

So we apply this type of methodology to each resource area studied in the review, such as socioeconomics, air quality, land use, et cetera.

The first set of issues I'm going to talk about

relates to the cooling system. We looked at issues such as discharges from the plant into the Savannah River, aquatic species being affected due to water intake systems, and impacts the cooling towers may have on plants and birds.

All cooling system impacts applicable to Vogtle Units 1 and 2 are Category 1 issues covered in the generic EIS. This means that the NRC has made a generic determination that the impacts from normal nuclear plant operations during the period of extended operation, or license renewal, are small.

Since impacts from the plant are not expected to increase on a year-to-year basis during the license renewal period and since we found no new and significant information related to this issue, we have preliminarily adopted the conclusions reached in the GEIS.

There is one aquatic species federally listed as threatened and endangered that has the potential to occur in the vicinity of Plant Vogtle or its transmission lines, and that's the shortnose sturgeon. As part of a formal consultation process with the National Marine Fisheries Service, NRC staff developed a biological assessment for the shortnose sturgeon, which is included in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

within -- under Appendix E.

Based on this analysis, the staff's preliminary determination is that the impacts during the period of extended operation for Vogtle Units 1 and 2 and its associated transmission lines on the shortnose sturgeon is small.

There are seven terrestrial species identified as having the potential to occur near the Vogtle site or near its associated transmission lines. Of these species, only American alligator is found regularly on the Vogtle site. However, the American alligator is not itself rare, but has a listing of "threatened due to similarity of appearance" in order to protect the endangered American crocodile, which is not known to occur at the site.

Wood stork individuals have been seen within two miles of the site, as well as on two locations on a shared transmission right of way; but the closest colony is 28 miles away.

The NRC staff reviewed information from the site audit, Vogtle's Environmental Report, Georgia's Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The staff's preliminary determination is that the impacts during the period of extended operation for Vogtle Units 1 and 2 and its associated

transmission lines on threatened or endangered terrestrial species is small.

Radiological impacts are also a Category 1 issue, and therefore the impacts during the license renewal period is small. By design, the operation of nuclear power plants is expected to involve in small releases of radiological effluent. Plant Vogtle is no exception.

During our site audit we looked at selected parts of the radioactive effluent monitoring and radiological environmental monitoring programs and supporting documentation. We looked at how the gaseous and liquid effluents are controlled, treated, monitored, and released, as well as how solid radioactive wastes are handled, packaged, and shipped.

We looked at how the applicant's radiation protection program maintains radiological releases in compliance with the NRC's regulations. We also looked at the applicant's radiological environmental monitoring data from onsite, and onsite monitoring stations. The data included in these results of evaluations of water, milk, fish, food products, and direct radiation.

Based on our review of the data found at the calculated dose to the maximally exposed member of the

public to be well within NRC's radiation protection limits.

The dose of the maximally exposed person is a conservative calculation which assumes maximum values such as breathing rate, food consumption, water drinking, and proximity to the plant associated with an individual who is exposed from all radiation sources from Plant Vogtle.

Based on a historic view of radiological data and current status of the plant's radiological systems, the staff concluded that radiological releases from the plant are expected to be similar, on a year-to-year basis, during the period of extended operation.

During the staff's review, no new and significant information related with this issue was found, and thus we have preliminarily concluded that the radiological impact on human health and the environment is small. This finding is consistent with the NRC's finding as contained in the license renewal Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

Postulated Accidents: There are two classes of accidents evaluated in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement: design-basis accidents and severe accidents. Design-basis accidents are those accidents that the plant is designed to withstand without risk to the public. The

ability of the plant to withstand these accidents has to be demonstrated before the plant is granted a license.

Because this licensee has demonstrated acceptable plant performance for the design-basis accidents through the life of the plant, the Commission found in the generic EIS that the environmental impacts of design-basis accidents is small for all plants.

The second category of accidents is severe accidents. Severe accidents are, by definition, more severe than design-basis accidents, because the result would be substantial damage to the reactor core. The Commission found in the generic EIS that the risk of a severe accident is small for all plants.

Nevertheless, the Commission determined that alternatives to mitigate severe accidents must be considered for all plants that have not yet done so. These are called severe accident mitigation alternatives, or SAMAs, and require site-specific analysis. The purpose of the SAMA evaluation is to ensure that plant changes with the potential of changing severe accident safety performance are identified and evaluated.

The scope of potential plant improvements considered include hardware modifications, procedural changes, training improvements, and basically a full

spectrum of potential changes. The scope includes SAMAs that would prevent core damage, as well as SAMAs that would improve containment performance if a core damage event occurs.

The preliminary results of the Plant Vogtle SAMA evaluation are summarized on this slide. Sixteen potential SAMA candidate improvements were identified for Vogtle Units 1 and 2. Two SAMAs were identified as potentially cost-beneficial. Neither of the potentially cost-beneficial SAMAs, however, are related to managing the effects of plant aging during the license renewal period.

Accordingly, they are not required to be implemented as part of license renewal; regardless, Southern Nuclear Operating Company has indicated in their Environmental Report that they will further evaluate or implement these mitigation alternatives.

Cumulative impacts are the impacts of license renewal, taken together with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes those actions.

The NRC staff has identified reasonably foreseeable actions occurring in the future that are considered in this review for its cumulative impacts on

the environment. Among identified actions, major facilities at the Savannah River site, including the proposed Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication facility, were included in our analysis.

Additionally, the construction and operation of up to two new nuclear units at the Vogtle site, Units 3 and 4, were considered. Southern Nuclear Operating Company submitted its combined license application for Units 3 and 4 in March 2008.

Submitting this application does not commit Southern Company to build the new units, nor does it constitute approval by the NRC. After considering and evaluating the environmental and safety implications of the proposal, the NRC will decide whether to approve or deny a license. Should Southern Company receive approval from the NRC and decide to construct one or two new nuclear power plants at the Vogtle site, the cumulative impacts of this action could range from small to large in the immediate vicinity of the Vogtle site.

The specific cumulative impacts of the combined license action will depend on the actual design, characteristics, and construction practices proposed by the applicant. Such details are not available at this time, but a team from NRC's Office of New Reactors is in

the process of conducting this environmental review.

The detailed environmental impacts of the combined license action at the Vogtle site will be online and addressed in a separate environmental impact statement that will be prepared by NRC staff. And as I mentioned, that will project is managed by our colleague Mark Notich.

Of note, NRC has scheduled meetings to be held here on July 17 to discuss the environmental review for Units 3 and 4. Mark Notich will be here after the meeting should you have any questions pertaining to that process.

As part of the environmental review process, we also evaluate the number of alternatives to license renewal; specifically, we look at the impacts of replacing the power from Vogtle Units 1 and 2, approximately 2300 megawatts, with power from other sources or utility conservation.

Alternatives that the team looked at include not renewing the license, as well as replacing all those generation of power from other power plants, such as coal, natural gas, or new nuclear.

We also considered the impact and capabilities of providing replacement power with electricity purchased from other providers. We also looked at other technologies such as biomass, wind, and solar power. We

also analyzed a combination of these alternatives, including conservation, natural gas, wood-fire generation, and wind power.

For each alternative, we looked at the same types of issues that we did when evaluating the environmental impacts of license renewal.

The NRC's preliminary conclusion is that the environmental impacts of not renewing the licenses -- that is, plant shut-down -- could range from small to large impacts. Environmental impacts from likely power-generation alternatives could reach moderate to large significance, in at least some areas evaluated.

For the combination alternative, the environmental impacts would likely be small for most areas considered, with some potential moderate impacts.

During the environmental review we found no information that was both new and significant. Therefore, we have preliminarily adopted the generic EIS conclusions that the impact associated with the 69 issues will be small.

In the Plant Vogtle Draft Environmental Impact Statement we analyzed the remaining 23 site-specific issues that were applicable to Vogtle Units 1 and 2 and determined that the environmental impacts resulting from

these issues were also small.

Based on these conclusions, the NRC's preliminary recommendation is that the environmental impacts of license renewal are not so great that license renewal would be unreasonable.

Listed here are some important dates for the Plant Vogtle License Renewal Environmental Review. In April 2008 we issued the document we're discussing tonight: the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement -- Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

We are currently accepting public comments on this draft until July 16, 2008. The final supplemental EIS is scheduled to be published in January 2009.

This slide identifies me as your primary point of contact within the NRC for the environmental review. As Donnie mentioned, he is also the PM on the project in charge of the safety review, which is ongoing.

Documents related to the Plant Vogtle review may be found next door at the Burke County Library. And at the bottom of this slide, also in your handouts, is the Internet address where you can directly access all documents pertaining to this review.

There are several ways you can provide comments

on the Plant Vogtle Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: You can provide your comments today during the meeting. If perhaps you are not ready to provide your comments today, you can email them to this address: Vogtle_LR_EIS@nrc.gov. You can also send your comments to us by mail, or you can hand-deliver them to our headquarters in Maryland.

And with that, this presentation is concluded. We're happy to answer any questions you may have on this presentation, and give your comments.

MR. ASHLEY: Thanks, J.P. As I mentioned earlier, we have some individuals asked to make comments and we can either do it one of two ways; you can come up here to the podium, or I can bring you the portable microphone. Either way, we have to use a microphone to make sure everybody hears you.

So first up is Mr. A.K. Hasan,

Mr. Hasan, would you like to come up?

And Mr. Hasan will be followed by Ms. Dianne Valentine.

MR. HASAN: Good afternoon. I'm A.K. Hasan, president and founder of CSRA Citizens for Nuclear Energy. We are stakeholders with legitimate interests in the operations of Plant Vogtle. We are here to remind the NRC

and its office of nuclear reactor regulation that in America, abiding by the law is all that is demanded of us as private citizens and corporate businesses.

Of course it is more rewarding and inspirational when we aim higher and achieve more. Nevertheless, higher achievement is not the standard; it is the exception. Therefore, to decide that Southern Nuclear Operating Company failed to meet some theoretical standards that were never established by the federal or state government as prerequisites for construction and/or operation of nuclear reactors Units 1 and 2 would undoubtedly be adhering to the cliché, changing the rules in the middle of the game.

Yet there are those that hope to convince the office of nuclear regulation that Plant Vogtle's operations should be judged on some nonexisting standards. Since these theoretical standards did not and do not exist, how then shall Plant Vogtle be judged?

The facts are these: Southern Nuclear Operating Company has conducted business under laws and statutes of the federal government and in the State of Georgia since Unit 1 went on line in 1987 and Unit 2 went on line in 1989.

Therefore, the operation and management of

Units 1 and 2 are well documented, so thoroughly documented that there are likely enough regulatory documents on file to fill at least one U-Haul truck if not several.

The point is this: The relicensing of Units 1 and 2 is not about pie-in-the-sky theories, about what could happen to our environment if the units are permitted to continue operating. Why would the NRC focus its energies on dreamed-up speculation, speculative theories, when volumes of factual data are available for your examination?

Would not your assessment for future predictions of environmental impact yield predictions that are more accurate if you examine factual documents showing what, if anything, happened to the environment over the past 20 years?

Furthermore, as a nation of laws, would not it be as important to assess whether or not Southern Nuclear Operating Company enjoys the power of complying with state and federal laws and statutes over the past 20 years?

If the answer to these questions is yes, would not it be appropriate to concede that Southern Nuclear Operating Company and Georgia Power did conform its operations of Plant Vogtle Units 1 and 2 in accordance

with federal and state laws?

Moreover, after such a concession, would it not be appropriate to approve the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for license renewal of Vogtle Units 1 and 2? Thank you.

MR. ASHLEY: Dianne Valentine? Ms. Valentine?

(No response.)

MR. ASHLEY: We'll come back to her later.

Nina Cann-Woode.

MS. CANN-WOODE: Hi and good afternoon. I'm Nina Cann-Woode, and I speak today on behalf of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition. We support the construction of new reactors and are actively engaged in generating a public dialogue to educate others about the way that nuclear power can enhance America's energy security and economic growth and health, including the environment.

As technology advances, our economy expands, and our population increases, so too will our need for energy growth. Consider that today, all renewable sources produce 2 percent of our electricity; all nuclear power accounts for 20 percent. That's one out of every five homes and businesses in the United States.

Here in Georgia, nuclear power provides almost 25 percent of the state's energy. The reality is we will

require more from a variety of sources in the years ahead. A wise energy policy recognizes the virtue of diversity; and in that diverse plan, nuclear energy is a critical component.

As we approach the hot summer months, it is important to recognize that nuclear power plants have a proven record for performance in severe weather conditions, including drought. Given extreme temperatures, they will continue to operate safely. In fact, the nuclear plants here in the Southeast were critical to meeting electricity demand during a two-week heat wave in August last year, and posed a new average daily capacity factor of more than 98 percent.

During this time, too, Southern Company set a new, all-time system peak record of 40,870 megawatts, more than 7 percent higher than the previous record set in August 2006.

Water plays an important role in nuclear power plants. It circulates through these facilities to cool equipment, returns quickly to its source, and is never exposed to radioactive material. Nuclear plants consume small amounts of water relative to other uses. Electric power generation is among the smallest users of water, accounting for about 3 percent of fresh water consumption

in America, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The majority of water is used for irrigation, at 8 percent consumption, followed by residential use at 7 percent. Consider the facts: Nuclear energy is clean; it is the only large-scale emissions-free source of electricity that we can readily expand to meet our growing energy demands.

We all share a stake in America's energy future. Now is the time for our country to support nuclear energy as a means to generate electricity with a clean, safe, and dependable source of power.

MR. ASHLEY: William Hummel, followed by Chris Henry.

MR. HUMMEL: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is William Hummel, and I'm also speaking today on behalf of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition.

CASEnergy is a grassroots organization dedicated to informing the public of the benefits of nuclear technology. Our coalition, comprised of over 1600 individuals and organizational members, is led by two co-chairs, former New Jersey Governor and former EPA Administrator, Christine Todd-Whitman, and one of the founders of Greenpeace and former leader, Dr. Patrick Moore.

Nuclear already provides 20 percent of the United States' electricity, and with electricity demand expected to increase 25 percent nationally by 2030, the United States needs more nuclear energy if it wants to keep up with our growing energy needs.

Conservation alone won't meet our growing need, and nuclear energy can't be the only solution. A diverse mix of energy sources will serve us all best. However, as we look down the road, we should promote the increase in the use of nuclear energy, as it is environmentally clean, and it is a reliable path to meeting our country's needs efficiently.

Nuclear energy is safe; in fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has shown that it is safer to work at a nuclear power plant than it is in the manufacturing sector, or even in the real estate or financial industries.

Additionally, you would have to live near a nuclear power plant for more than 2,000 years to get the same amount of radiation exposure that you would when you receive a single diagnostic medical x-ray.

With rising energy costs a concern for every American, nuclear energy is an affordable and reliable economic choice for electricity. Nuclear power has the

lowest production cost of the major sources of electricity; nuclear plants are the most efficient on the electricity grid, and the costs are more predictable than other energy sources.

A nuclear power plant makes a good neighbor. It supports high-paying jobs directly at the plant, generates additional jobs in the community where it's located, and contributes by helping to build good schools, better roads, and other civic improvements.

I thank you for allowing me to come speak today, and -- thank you.

MR. ASHLEY: Chris Henry, followed by Mr. Merv Waldrop.

MR. HENRY: Mr. Ashley, members of the NRC, welcome to Burke County -- in this case, welcome back to Burke County. I'm Chris Henry; I'm the administrative liaison for Burke County Public Schools, and joined here today by our superintendent Ms. Linda Bailey.

Obviously I lost the coin flip.

(Laughter.)

MR. HENRY: The school system supports the renewal of the operating license for Units 1 and 2. In many ways today I think that Ms. Bailey and I represent all the teachers and the employees of the Burke County

Public School System. We're a unique group. Not many employees of public school systems can sit down and have a serious talk with you about the utility tax digest.

But our teachers are quite skilled at that. We also represent probably 4500 students today. The unique thing about our students is they travel to probably the finest facilities and public schools in the State of Georgia; they generally travel on an air-conditioned bus; they get quality instruction all day long, and they eat very good meals.

We're very proud of our school system. Our partnership with Plant Vogtle is very real and very effective. We are moving rapidly toward an energy academy at Burke County High School. That's quite an accomplishment; so you can see, Burke County is committed to Vogtle; Vogtle is committed to Burke County. We don't even tell NRC jokes in Burke County. Thank you.

(Laughter.)

MR. ASHLEY: Mr. Waldrop?

MR. WALDROP: I'm Merv Waldrop. I'm speaking on behalf of the Burke County Board of Commissioners and County Administrator. I'd like to also say welcome back to the county to all of the representatives of the NRC.

I've had an opportunity to review some of the

documents that come into my office; quite often some of them are lengthy, with the environmental impact reports, and -- you've been very thorough in your work.

Our concerns seem to be all addressed; we concur with those reports: the impacts would be small or negligent, in the environmental impact. The one concern we have is that -- in the area of alternatives.

If the plant were not to be relicensed, then the impact would be large. That would have a significant impact on the socioeconomic concerns in the area, and the impact on the economy and the school system, everything else that relates to Burke County; many jobs would -- are related not just directly to the plant but in the whole community.

So we concur with the report that the impacts of issuing the license renewal would be small. If the license was not renewed, then there would be severe impacts to our community. So we would like to encourage the NRC to reissue those licenses. Thank you.

MR. ASHLEY: Those are all the individuals who have requested the opportunity to speak. We would like to offer the microphone to additional members of the audience who would like to make a comment at this time. If you're so inclined, come forward.

(No response.)

MR. ASHLEY: Okay. We'll go into the questioning phase now of the meeting, and let me go over a couple of ground rules on the questions. Sometimes when we do these meetings there's a very large crowd and we have a lot of questions. Some people have more questions than others, and one of the things that we would like for you to do as you go through and ask your questions is, be mindful of the other individuals in the room that would really like to ask their questions.

I'll give you the opportunity to ask several questions, but once it seems like it's going to go on and on, I'll ask you to wait and make sure we get around to everyone and have a chance to ask their questions, and give it time and we'll come back to you. I think that's a fair way to do things, to give everyone an opportunity.

We want to try to stay, if we can, on topic: We're talking about the environmental impact statement and the environmental impacts of the plant operations. You may have other questions about plant operations or other aspects of the license renewal.

Let me just say we have a lot of documents, we have a lot of information on the website, and I can talk to you off-line at length about those aspects of the

application review.

Some areas associated with plant operations are just not in the scope of license renewal. Areas such as plant security, emergency planning are not being considered as part of this application's review process.

Those two, as well as other issues associated with the plant, are part of what we call the current licensing basis. You'll recall I mentioned the resident inspector earlier. He is at the plant every day. And also the inspection teams are here from Region II; they are looking at not only license renewal but the everyday operations of the plant.

And with that, I'd like to go to the floor for questions, I will bring you a mic, and you can just ask away.

Everybody's ready. Now you got to be ready to ask a question.

(No response.)

MR. ASHLEY: Surely someone in this room --

AUDIENCE: What's the deadline on submitting comments?

MR. ASHLEY: J.P., deadline for submitting comments.

MR. LEOUS: Yes. In the handout actually, the

deadline is July 16. And you can submit those in writing, either mail them in, or email them to the address, and that's Vogtle_LR_ -- yes, there you go.

MR. ASHLEY: If there are no more questions -- we do have one. You were just waiting for me to say that.

AUDIENCE: Given the massive workload within NRC involving new reactor licensing, are the resources sufficient to complete this relicensing on time?

MR. BENNER: Hi, Eric Benner, Branch Chief in Nuclear Regulatory Commission. We budget several years in advance for all of the workload the NRC has. The license renewal program is separate from the new reactor licensing program, so, you know, while ultimately the NRC's budget is one document, we develop a budget based on the expected applications many years in advance, and having anticipated the Vogtle license renewal several years in advance, we had adequately budgeted for the activity, and we fully intend to complete our activities on time.

MR. ASHLEY: Well, I'll give you one more opportunity. If there's no further questions, we will stand adjourned until seven o'clock this evening; we'll have another session just like this one. Thank you very much for your participation.

(Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m., the afternoon meeting was concluded