

January 9, 2009

Mr. Douglas C. McLearen, Chief  
Division of Archaeology & Protection  
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission  
Bureau for Historic Preservation  
Commonwealth Keystone Building, 2nd Floor  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION AND REQUEST FOR CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION  
IN THE SCOPING PROCESS FOR THE BELL BEND NUCLEAR POWER  
PLANT COMBINED LICENSE APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Mr. McLearen:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by PPL Bell Bend, LLC for a combined license (COL) for construction and operation of one new nuclear power plant at its Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant (BBNPP) Site near Berwick, Pennsylvania. 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 regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, is a cooperating agency with the NRC for the purpose of complying with NEPA. The NRC staff is currently seeking information from consulting parties and other individuals and organizations likely to have knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the area to identify issues relating to the proposed undertaking's potential effects on historic properties. The area of potential effect for this COL review is the area at the BBNPP Site and its immediate environs, which may be impacted by land-disturbing activities associated with the construction and operation of the new unit.

PPL Bell Bend, LLC submitted the application for a COL on October 10, 2008 pursuant to NRC requirements in 10 CFR Part 52. The NRC staff accepted the application for docketing on December 15, 2008. It 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 environmental report portion of the application is listed under the accession number ML082890680. The BBNPP COL application is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/col/bell-bend.html>.

The BBNPP Site consists of approximately 882 acres in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, approximately five miles northeast of Berwick, Pennsylvania on the Susquehanna River. The BBNPP Site is located west of the existing Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES), which has two operating boiling water reactors, Units 1 and 2, that have the capacity to generate 2,270 megawatts of electricity combined.

PPL Bell Bend, LLC plans to construct one new nuclear unit adjacent to the existing SSES, Units 1 and 2, in an area of open deciduous woodlands interspersed with grasslands, previously cultivated fields and orchards. Land use in the immediate vicinity of the site is primarily forested and agricultural.

PPL Bell Bend, LLC has stated there is no need for new transmission lines or corridors to connect the new reactor unit to the existing electrical grid. The existing 500 kV transmission line is planned to undergo a modification in 2012 to add the Susquehanna-Roseland Interconnection approved by the Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland (PJM) Regional Transmission Organization. This modification is planned independent of and without consideration for the BBNPP Project. On the BBNPP Site, planned facilities include one new 500 kV substation to transmit power from BBNPP, one new 500 kV transmission system switchyard (Susquehanna Yard #2), and two new 500 kV, 4,260 MVA circuits on individual towers connecting the BBNPP substation to the existing SSES 500 kV yard and to the proposed Susquehanna Yard #2. The 230 kV transmission lines currently passing through the BBNPP Site will be relocated to run along the northern boundary of the owner controlled area to provide a buffer from the cooling towers and provide additional areas for the location of structures. There will be an expansion of the existing SSES 500 kV switchyard and numerous breaker upgrades and associated modifications will be required at other existing substations and switchyards. All offsite modifications would be implemented within the existing substations and switchyards. In addition, certain sections of two offsite transmission lines will need to be refurbished to avoid network overloads.

The NRC staff hereby provides notice that in accordance with 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC staff is using the process required by NEPA for the preparation of the EIS to comply with the obligations imposed under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, in lieu of the procedures set forth in 36 CFR 800.3 through 800.6. Accordingly, the NRC staff is identifying parties who may wish to consult with our staff on the proposed action, and is inviting them to consult with the staff on this matter. Consultation will include participation in the scoping process; identification of historic properties on the BBNPP Site; assessment of the effects of the proposed action on any historic properties identified; and development of alternatives and proposed measures that might avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects of the proposed action on historic properties. The EIS will include analyses of potential impacts to historic properties that reflect consultation and will document the NRC staff's determination regarding the suitability of the proposed site for the construction and operation of one new nuclear plant. PPL Bell Bend, LLC has also identified three alternative sites that will be evaluated in the EIS. The staff's review will consider alternatives, including an evaluation of the alternative sites.

Through this letter, the NRC staff is initiating consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and you, in your position of State Historic Preservation Officer, regarding the PPL Bell Bend, LLC COL application. To complete consultation under 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC staff will forward the draft EIS to consulting parties for review and comment and will address the comments in the final EIS. Your office will receive a copy of the draft EIS along with a request for comments after it is issued. This draft EIS will include identification of historic properties, assessment of impacts, and our preliminary determination of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The anticipated publication date for the draft EIS is January 2010.

D. McLearen

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The NRC plans to hold a public meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2009, at the Berwick Area Senior High School, 1100 Fowler Avenue, Berwick, Pennsylvania 18603-3799. The meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m., and will continue until approximately 10:00 p.m. The meeting will be preceded by an open house from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., 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. In addition, during the week of March 2, 2009, the NRC plans to conduct a site audit to discuss with the applicant the detailed information that is the basis for the preparation of the environmental report (ER), to perform a walk down of the site and its environs, and to review documentation.

Please provide any information, comments, or concerns you feel are appropriate on the scope of the proposed action during the scoping comment period, which ends on March 9, 2009. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001 or by e-mail to [BBNP.COLEIS@nrc.gov](mailto:BBNP.COLEIS@nrc.gov).

If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff's environmental review of this COL application, please contact Ms. Stacey Imboden, NRC Environmental Project Manager for the environmental review for the BBNPP COL Project, at (301) 415-2462 or by e-mail at [Stacey.Imboden@nrc.gov](mailto:Stacey.Imboden@nrc.gov). In her absence, please contact Ms. Tomeka Terry at (301) 415-1488 or by email at [Tomeka.Terry@nrc.gov](mailto:Tomeka.Terry@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,  
*/RA/*

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

Docket Nos.: 52-039

cc: See next page

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Sincerely,  
/RA/

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

Docket Nos.: 52-039

cc: See next page

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