January 9, 2009

The Honorable LeRoy Howard, Chief
Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
P. O. Box 1283
Miami, OK 74355

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

Dear Chief Howard:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by PPL Bell Bend, LLC for a combined license (COL) for the 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's 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 its 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). ADAMS is accessible 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.

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 EIS will document the NRC staff's evaluation of the impacts of construction and operation of one new nuclear plant at the BBNPP Site. 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 evaluation of alternative sites. The EIS will contain the results of the review of the environmental impacts on the area surrounding the BBNPP Site that are related to terrestrial ecology, aquatic ecology, hydrology, socioeconomic issues, and historic properties (among others), and will contain a recommendation on whether the requested COL should be granted or denied. If granted, the COL would authorize the applicant to construct and operate the new proposed unit.

The NRC environmental review process includes an opportunity for public and inter-governmental participation in the environmental review. The BBNPP Site is in close proximity to lands that may be of interest to the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma. NRC staff wants to ensure that you are aware of our efforts and pursuant to 10 CFR 51.28(a), the NRC invites the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma to provide input to the scoping process relating to the NRC's environmental review of the COL application.

The NRC staff hereby provides notice that the staff will coordinate compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended through the requirements of NEPA. 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 Section 106 of the NHPA 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 the staff on the proposed action and is inviting them to consult with the NRC 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. To complete consultation under 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC will forward the draft EIS to you for your review and comment and will address your comments in the final EIS.

You 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.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.28 and 36 CFR 800.2(c), the NRC wishes to ensure that Indian Tribes that might have an interest in any potential historic properties in the area of potential effect are afforded the opportunity to identify their concerns, provide advice on the identification and evaluation of historic properties, including those of traditional religious and cultural importance, and, if necessary, participate in the resolution of any adverse effects to such properties.

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.

Please submit any written comments your tribe may have to offer on the scope of the environmental review by 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.

If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff's environmental review of this COL application, please contact Mrs. 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. In her absence, please contact Ms. Tomeka Terry at (301) 415-1488 or by email at 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 No.: 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 No.: 52-039
cc: See next page
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