SummerCEm Resource

From: Denver Merrill [dmgeech@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 3:48 PM
To: SummerCOLEIS Resource
Subject: Re: Federal Register / Vol. 74, No. 2 / Monday, January 5, 2009 / Notices - pg. 323
Attachments: image002.jpg; V.C. Summer Comments.doc

CITIZENS FOR SOUND CONSERVATION

Improving South Carolina's Environmental and Economic Quality of Life

January 27, 2009

Chief, Rules and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration
Mailstop TWB–05-B01M
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555–0001

Re: Federal Register / Vol. 74, No. 2 / Monday, January 5, 2009 / Notices – pg. 323
Docket Nos. 52–027 and 52–028

Please accept these comments on behalf of Citizens for Sound Conservation regarding the proposed expansion of the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station in Fairfield County, South Carolina. Citizens for Sound Conservation is a non-partisan not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving South Carolina's environmental and economic quality of life. Our support base is comprised of various individuals and organizations representing over 70,000 South Carolina manufacturers, realtors, home builders, contractors and maritime interests, among others.

For purposes of this hearing, we would like to be on record as supporting expansion of the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station for the following reasons.

First the general argument. Nuclear plants do not burn fossil fuels and thus do not emit pollutants associated with smog, acid rain and high ozone levels. Nuclear plants also do not produce "greenhouse" gases that many believe lead to global warming. As our nation looks for ways to clean up our air and address potential sources of global warming, nuclear plants must be a part of the solution. Additionally, water usage is minimal when put in the proper context. Nuclear plants that use cooling towers, such as the two future units at V.C. Summer, would consume the equivalent of 20 to 26 gallons of water per day per household. By comparison, according to

the USGS, an average three person household in the U.S. consumes approximately 300 gallons of water per day.

Not only is nuclear power better for the environment than more traditional methods of generation, but nuclear plants safely generate upwards of 52 percent of the power produced in South Carolina – and have been doing so since the 1960s. The V.C. Summer plant itself has been providing electricity to South Carolina residents for more than 24 years. Such an historical record leads to a high degree of confidence regarding the safety of this expansion. In fact, a survey of plant neighbors across the U. S. – including people living around V.C. Summer - found that 77 percent are willing to have new nuclear plants nearby.

Additionally, nuclear power is much more reliable and cost effective than renewable technologies like wind and solar, which cannot provide the capacity or around-the-clock generation required to meet South Carolina's near term energy needs. The sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow; but nuclear plants can operate at their maximum output 24 hours a day, seven days a week for months on end. This helps hold down the cost of nuclear-generated electricity.

To produce as much electricity as the V.C. Summer Station, a solar-powered plant would require panels covering an area the size of Columbia, S.C., while equivalent wind generation would require hundreds of turbines stretching across the entire South Carolina coast. By comparison, V.C. Summer takes up only a few square miles.

Fossil fuels, coal and natural gas are currently the only other means of generating large quantities of electricity all day long, day after day. The difference is the cost of generating electricity with nuclear fuel has decreased thirty percent over the past 10 years, while during that same time the cost of generating electricity with fossil fuels has risen substantially – with no end in sight. Currently, the cost to produce 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity (the approximate amount that an average customer uses in a month) using nuclear power is about $75. Coal, natural gas, offshore wind and solar power would cost $92, $105, $173 and $656 respectively to produce the same amount.

And when compared with fossil fuel sources, nuclear plants are extremely efficient. One uranium fuel pellet — about the size of a pencil eraser — can produce about the same amount of electricity as 17,000 cubic feet of natural gas, 1,780 pounds of coal or 149 gallons of oil. V.C. Summer's reactors will utilize 157 fuel bundles each that are designed to last four-and-a-half years before being replaced. Clearly, that's a cost benefit as well as an environmental benefit.

Specifically to the impact of the expansion of the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, it's not only environmentally safe, but Fairfield County will see a substantial economic benefit. As with the existing facility, all buildings containing nuclear equipment are built to ensure radioactive by-products are safely contained. In addition to backup systems that monitor and regulate what goes on inside the nuclear reactor, there will be a series of physical barriers to prevent the escape of radioactive materials. Used fuel from the additional units will be stored on-site in their own spent fuel pools. Dry cask storage is an option for longer term storage if construction of a permanent federal repository does not come on line.

Economically, property taxes totaling more than $19 million are paid annually for the site itself and more than 800 are employed at and live in close proximity to V.C. Summer. These are dollars, jobs and residents to the area that benefit schools, roads and other local infrastructure. Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 people will be employed for three to four years during construction of the two new units, while another 800 to 1,000 full-time workers will be hired to operate the new reactors.

With a 12% unemployment rate; 18% of Fairfield residents living at or below the poverty level; and a median household income of $8000 less than the state average, the existing and future jobs associated with V.C. Summer are vital to this county's growth and prosperity.

Recognized environmental leaders like Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore, Whole Earth Catalog founder Stewart Brand and Gaia Theory creator James Lovelock are vocal supporters of expanding nuclear power capacity across America. If we are truly serious about protecting the environment and providing needed energy for residents and businesses alike, nuclear energy is the only option available today that can provide large-scale electricity production at all times and do it economically without polluting our environment.

For these reasons Citizens for Sound Conservation supports the proposed expansion of the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station.

Contact:
Denver Merrill
Citizens for Sound Conservation
1643 Savannah Hwy, Suite 284
Charleston, SC 29407
843-737-4333
info@citizensforsoundconservation.org
www.citizensforsoundconservation.org

Federal Register Notice: 74FR323
Comment Number: 14

Mail Envelope Properties (851965BDC63F478480CD941E62A0FA1C)

Subject: Re: Federal Register / Vol. 74, No. 2 / Monday, January 5, 2009 / Notices - pg. 323
Sent Date: 1/27/2009 3:48:00 PM
Received Date: 1/27/2009 3:48:25 PM
From: Denver Merrill

Created By: dmgeech@comcast.net

Recipients:
"SummerCOLEIS Resource" <Summer.COLEIS@nrc.gov>
Tracking Status: None

Post Office: denvermerrill

Files	**Size**	**Date & Time**
MESSAGE	6997	1/27/2009 3:48:25 PM
image002.jpg	17883	
V.C. Summer Comments.doc	175168	

Options
Priority: Standard
Return Notification: No
Reply Requested: No
Sensitivity: Normal
Expiration Date:
Recipients Received:

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