

July 21, 2009

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

Before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board

In the Matter of )  
 ) Docket No. 52-017-COL  
Dominion Virginia Power, et al. )  
 ) ASLBP No. 08-863-01-COL  
North Anna Power Station, Unit 3 )

**Dominion’s Answer Opposing BREDL’s Contention 10**

Pursuant to 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(h), Virginia Electric and Power Company, dba Dominion Virginia Power (“Dominion”), hereby answers and opposes “Intervenor’s Amended Contention Ten” (“Motion”), which the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League’s (“BREDL”) filed on June 26, 2009. The Motion asks the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (“Board”) to admit proposed Contention 10, which, in part, raises issues previously raised and rejected in Contention 1. BREDL’s Motion should be denied because it does not meet the requirements of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(1) regarding admissibility. Moreover, BREDL’s Motion does not make the required demonstrations under 10 C.F.R. §§ 2.309(f)(2) and 2.309(c) for late-filed contentions.

**I. PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

This proceeding involves the application, submitted by Dominion on behalf of itself and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative on November 26, 2007, for a combined license to construct and operate an ESBWR at the North Anna Power Station (“NAPS”).<sup>1</sup> BREDL filed its “Petition for Intervention and Request for Hearing” (“BREDL Petition”) on May 9, 2008, alleging eight separate contentions. The BREDL Petition included Contention 1, which claimed that

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<sup>1</sup> See North Anna 3 Combined License Application (Rev. 0, Nov. 2007), available at ADAMS Accession No. ML073320913 (“Application”).

Dominion's COLA failed to address Dominion's plan for on-site storage of LLRW in the event that an off-site disposal facility is unavailable. BREDL Petition at 5.

The Board's Memorandum and Order of August 15, 2008 treated BREDL Contention 1 as involving two separate issues: (1) "that Dominion's Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR) should have explained Dominion's plan for complying with NRC regulations governing the management of LLRW in the absence of an offsite disposal facility;" and (2) "that Dominion's COL ER should have examined the environmental consequences of retaining LLRW at the North Anna site." Virginia Electric & Power Co. (North Anna Power Station Unit 3), LBP-08-15, 68 N.R.C. 294, 313 (2008) ("LBP-08-15"). The Board admitted the first issue in part, and held the second issue to be inadmissible. Id. at 313 n.86, 316, 325. The Board also found that "disposal of Greater-Than-Class-C waste is the responsibility of the federal government," id. at 313 n.86, and disagreed with BREDL's theory that Dominion might have to comply with the regulations concerning licensing requirements for land disposal of radioactive waste. Id. at 316. The Board therefore admitted a narrowed version of Contention 1, concerning omission from the FSAR of a plan for on-site storage of Class B and C waste only. Id. at 313 n.86, 325. In admitting Contention 1, the Board expressly noted that it is a "contention of omission . . . of necessary information from the FSAR." Id. at 313, 325; see also id. at 314, 317, 318, 320.

On March 2, 2009, Dominion identified in its disclosures to BREDL a report prepared for Dominion by GE-Hitachi, "Long-Term Low-Level Waste Storage in the ESBWR Radwaste Building." That report provides the technical evaluation supporting Dominion's plan for managing Class B and C LLRW if an offsite facility is not available to accept such wastes. On May 21, 2009, Dominion filed an amendment to its COLA to include that plan ("Amended COLA"). Dominion electronically provided a copy of the letter identifying the changes that

were made to the COLA, along with revised Section 11.4 of the FSAR, which contains Dominion's plan for managing Class B and C waste, to BREDL on May 27, 2009. Because the description contained in the COLA amendment moots BREDL Contention 1 as admitted by the Board, Dominion moved to dismiss Contention 1 as moot on June 1, 2009. BREDL submitted its Motion proposing Contention 10 on June 26, 2009.

## **II. ARGUMENT**

### **A. Applicable Legal Standards**

Three regulations address the admissibility of new contentions after an adjudicatory proceeding has been initiated: 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2); 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c); and 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(1).

Under 10 C.F.R. §§ 2.309(f)(2)(i)-(iii), a new contention may be filed after the initial filing only by leave of the presiding officer, upon a showing that:

- (i) The information upon which the amended or new contention is based was not previously available;
- (ii) The information upon which the amended or new contention is based is materially different than information previously available; and
- (iii) The amended or new contention has been submitted in a timely fashion based on the availability of the subsequent information.

Moreover, the proponent must also demonstrate that the eight-factor balancing test of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c) is met.<sup>2</sup> These eight factors are:

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<sup>2</sup> While some Licensing Boards have held that the late-filing criteria in 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c) do not apply where a party has met the timeliness factors for a new or amended contention in 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2), Dominion respectfully submits that those Licensing Board decisions have overlooked the Commission's statements in promulgating these rules. In the supplemental information accompanying these rules, the Commission stated:

The Commission also declines to adopt the thrust of the suggestions to allow free amendment and addition of contentions based upon new information such as the SER. . . . The adequacy of the applicant's license application, not the NRC staff's safety evaluation, is the safety issue in any licensing proceeding, and under longstanding decisions of the agency, contentions on the adequacy of the SER are not cognizable in a

- (i) Good cause, if any, for the failure to file on time;
- (ii) The nature of the requestor's/petitioner's right under the Act to be made a party to the proceeding;
- (iii) The nature and extent of the requestor's/petitioner's property, financial or other interest in the proceeding;
- (iv) The possible effect of any order that may be entered in the proceeding on the requestor's/petitioner's interest;
- (v) The availability of other means whereby the requestor's/petitioner's interest will be protected;
- (vi) The extent to which the requestor's/petitioner's interests will be represented by existing parties;
- (vii) The extent to which the requestor's/petitioner's participation will broaden the issues or delay the proceeding; and
- (viii) The extent to which the requestor's/petitioner's participation may reasonably be expected to assist in developing a sound record.

In weighing these factors, whether good cause exists for failure to file on time is given the most weight. State of New Jersey (Department of Law and Public Safety), CLI-93-25, 38 N.R.C. 289, 296 (1993). If the petitioner cannot demonstrate good cause for lateness, petitioner's demonstration on the other factors must be particularly strong in order to justify the admission of the contention. Texas Utilities Electric Co. (Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station, Units 1 and 2), CLI-92-12, 36 N.R.C. 62, 73 (1992). The Commission has determined

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proceeding. . . . If information in the SER bears upon an existing contention or suggests a new contention, it is appropriate for the Commission to evaluate under § 2.309(c) the possible effect that the admission of amended or new contentions may have on the course of the proceeding.

69 Fed. Reg. 2,182, 2,202 (Jan. 14, 2004) (emphasis added) (citations omitted). Thus, sections 2.309(c) and 2.309(f)(2) should not be interpreted as being mutually exclusive. Rather, the timeliness requirements in 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2) should be interpreted as elaborating upon the showing that must be made to satisfy the good cause criterion in 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c)(1). Indeed, the provisions in Section 2.309(f)(2) merely codify the case law interpreting the good cause prong of the late-filing factors. Compare Comanche Peak, CLI-92-12, 36 N.R.C. at 69-73; Texas Utilities Electric Co. (Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station, Unit 2), CLI-93-4, 37 N.R.C. 156, 164-65 (1993). Moreover, the Commission's citations in Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc. (Millstone Nuclear Power Station, Units 2 and 3), CLI-04-36, 60 N.R.C. 631, 636 n.5 (2004), equate sections 2.309(f)(2) and 2.309(c)(1). Similarly, Florida Power & Light Co. (Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, Units 1 and 2, et al.), CLI-06-21, 64 N.R.C. 30, 33-34 (2006) suggests that both should be addressed.

that the availability of other means to protect the petitioner's interest, and the ability of other parties to represent the petitioner's interest, are entitled to less weight than the other factors. See id. at 74.

Finally, even if a petitioner satisfies the requirements of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2) and 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c), it must also demonstrate that its new contention satisfies the standards for admissibility in 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(1)(i)-(vii). Sacramento Municipal Utility District (Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station), CLI-93-12, 37 N.R.C. 355, 362-63 (1993).

As discussed below, BREDL's proposed new contention does not satisfy any of these requirements.

**B. Proposed Contention 10 Fails to Satisfy the Contention Admissibility Criteria of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(1)**

Proposed Contention 10 has three parts. First, BREDL alleges that Dominion does not offer a viable plan for disposal of Class B, C, and GTCC waste and does not address NRC regulations for disposal of LLRW. Motion at 2. Second, BREDL asserts that Dominion's COLA amendment does not address BREDL Contention 1 because it reduces storage durations for Class A waste. Id. Third, BREDL states that Dominion's volume estimates for LLRW storage are not conservative estimates because the assumption of good fuel performance is unsupported. Id.

**1. BREDL's Assertion Regarding Disposal and 10 C.F.R. Part 61 Continues to be Inadmissible**

The portion of Proposed Contention 10 regarding disposal of LLRW is inadmissible because the Board has already rejected that issue in LBP-08-15. In its statement of facts for Proposed Contention 10, BREDL twice quotes at length from the part of its original Contention 1

which alleges that Dominion does not have a plan for disposal of LLRW and that NAPS Unit 3 should be licensed under 10 C.F.R. Part 61 as a permanent disposal site. Motion at 5, 8-9. As Dominion explained in response to Contention 1, the Part 61 regulations establish the requirements for a land disposal facility and are not applicable to storage at a nuclear power plant. See Dominion's Answer Opposing Petition for Intervention (June 3, 2008) at 18. In LBP-08-15, the Board disagreed with BREDL's theory that Dominion was required to satisfy the Part 61 regulations and develop a plan for disposal of LLRW. LBP-08-15 at 316. In Contention 10, BREDL is seeking a second bite at the apple by quoting from Contention 1 and again asserting that this is a deficiency in Dominion's COLA. No new facts have arisen to change the Board's original analysis of this portion of Contention 1 or to reconsider BREDL's theory – the same language that the Board held to be inadmissible in Contention 1 is likewise inadmissible in Contention 10.

Moreover, the Commission has specifically held that 10 C.F.R. Part 61 is inapplicable to a COL proceeding. Tennessee Valley Authority (Bellefonte Nuclear Power Plant, Units 3 and 4), CLI-09-03, 69 N.R.C. \_\_\_ (slip op. at 5) (Feb. 17, 2009).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the Commission held that the licensing board in Bellefonte was correct in rejecting allegations related to disposal virtually identical to BREDL's claim here. Id. As the Commission held, "low-level waste disposal (as both the Bellefonte and North Anna Boards recognize) is irrelevant to adjudicatory proceedings

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<sup>3</sup> As in Bellefonte, BREDL's claims regarding disposal are based only on 10 C.F.R. Part 61. See Motion at 8-9 (quoting Gunderson June 26, 2009 Declaration at ¶ 20). Indeed, Mr. Gunderson's Declaration merely quotes the Part 61 allegations in BREDL's original Contention 1 that were rejected by this Board. Neither BREDL nor Mr. Gunderson identify any NRC regulation or position requiring a COL applicant to provide a disposal plan. Mr. Gunderson's conclusory statement that the quoted allegations from BREDL's original Contention 1 are his expert opinion (id.) do not support the existence of any genuine, material dispute with the application. As the Commission has held, an expert opinion that merely states a conclusion without providing a reasoned basis or explanation for that conclusion is inadequate because it deprives the Board of the ability to make the necessary, reflective assessment of the opinion. USEC, Inc. (American Centrifuge Plant), CLI-06-10, 63 N.R.C. 451, 472 (2006). Mr. Gunderson's declaration is entirely conclusory.

. . . while low-level waste storage is properly part of such proceedings. . . .” *Id.* at 13. BREDL’s attempt to resurrect its disposal claims must be rejected.

**2. BREDL’s Assertion Regarding Reduction in Storage Capacities for Class A Waste is Inadmissible**

The second part of Proposed Contention 10 is inadmissible because it is unsupported and does not raise a material issue in dispute as required by 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2)(vi). While BREDL accuses Dominion of “robbing Peter to pay Paul,” because Dominion has reduced its Class A storage space from 6 months to 3 months (Motion at 6), BREDL provides no information that the Class A storage space is insufficient, fails to meet any regulation or requirement, or creates any safety issue. Thus, BREDL does not demonstrate the existence of any genuine issue of material fact.

The sole basis for these claims appears to be Mr. Gundersen’s assertion that Dominion is assuming “a storage facility of some sort will be quickly made available for Class A waste,” and that this premise is less conservative than the original design basis assumption. Gundersen Decl. at ¶ 12. There is, however, no basis for Mr. Gundersen’s suggestion that Dominion is assuming some “storage facility” for Class A waste, or that any such facility needs to “be quickly made available.” Indeed, an existing disposal site (the Energy Solutions facility in Utah) is available for Class A waste. Further, the amended COLA states that the storage capacity reserved for Class A waste exceeds that recommended by Branch Technical Position 11-3 of the SRP. Amended COLA, Part 7, Exhibit A to Dominion’s Motion to Dismiss Contention 1 as Moot (June 1, 2009) (Mark up of North Anna COLA at 7). BREDL does not challenge this

information in the COLA<sup>4</sup> and provides no explanation of why three months of Class A waste storage capacity would present any safety concern. BREDL has made no showing that more than 3 months of Class A waste storage space is required by any rule or safety consideration. Mr. Gunderson's conclusory assertion that Dominion's storage plan is "less conservative" (Gundersen Decl. at ¶ 12) fails to provide any reasoned basis that would support admitting a contention. USEC, CLI-06-10, 63 N.R.C. at 472.

BREDL's assertion that 10 years of storage for Class B and C waste is inadequate because the duration of the operating license is 40 years, Motion at 9, similarly fails to raise any genuine material issue. BREDL does not identify any NRC regulation that requires a plant to have 40 years of storage capacity. Nor is there any requirement in the NRC Standard Review Plan to provide a 40-year storage space. See NUREG 0800, Rev. 3, § 11.4, App.11.4-A (Mar. 2007).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in holding that a similar contention should have been rejected in the Bellefonte proceeding, the Commission specifically noted that Bellefonte would have two years of Class B and C storage space – an observation that belies any requirement for 40-year capacity.

Further, BREDL fails to address or challenge the portions of the amended COLA that address the possibility of longer storage if needed. First, the COLA amendment indicates that a

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<sup>4</sup> A contention that does not directly controvert a position taken by the applicant in the license application is subject to dismissal. See PPL Susquehanna LLC (Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, Units 1 and 2), LBP-07-10, 66 N.R.C. 1, 24 (2007); Sacramento Municipal Utility District (Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station), LBP-93-23, 38 N.R.C. 200, 247-48 (1993); Texas Utilities Electric Co. (Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station, Unit 2), LBP-92-37, 36 N.R.C. 370, 384 (1992). See also USEC, CLI-06-10, 63 N.R.C. at 462 (upholding dismissal of a contention that failed to address and take issue with statements in the application).

<sup>5</sup> The Commission has previously contemplated five years of storage capacity. Prior to 1994, the Commission contemplated that if extended storage of LLW at an existing plant raised an unreviewed safety question, the plant would obtain a Part 30 license to store LLRW on site, limited to five years. See RIS-2008-32, Interim Low Level Radioactive Waste Storage at Reactor Sites (Dec. 30, 2008) at 2. One of the reasons for this five-year limit was to discourage longer term storage which might remove the incentive for development of new offsite facilities. See SECY-94-198, Review of Existing Guidance Concerning the Extended Storage of Low-Level Radioactive Waste (Aug. 1, 1994) (ADAMS Accession No. ML071640462) at 6. In 1994, this five year limit was eliminated when the Commission determined in SECY-94-198 that separate Part 30 licenses were not required. See RIS-2008-32 at 3.

waste minimization plan would be implemented, which would extend the storage capacity, and details the types of measures that would be included. See Amended COLA, FSAR § 11.4.1. BREDL does not identify any deficiency with this plan. In addition, Dominion indicates that if further capacity were required, it would be built in accordance with the standards in Appendix 11.4-A of the SRP. See id. BREDL also fails to address this portion of the amended COLA, and fails to identify any deficiency or safety issue associated with this plan. BREDL's failure to address and challenge this information in the amended COLA is also grounds for rejecting Proposed Contention 10. See note 4 supra.

### **3. BREDL's Assertion Regarding Fuel Performance is Inadmissible**

Finally, BREDL's allegation that Dominion has not conservatively estimated Class B and C storage capacity is inadmissible because it is based on a mischaracterization of the amended COLA, fails to present any real challenge to the waste volumes used in the storage estimate, and to the extent it may be construed as challenging those estimates, is an impermissible challenge to information in the ESBWR design control document. For all of these reasons, this third claim too fails to raise any genuine, material dispute with the Application.

BREDL bases its allegation on selective quotes from the Amended COLA, which it suggests indicate that Dominion has based its waste volume estimates on an assumption that there will be good fuel performance. See Motion at 7. In fact, the Amended COLA says:

This Class B and C waste storage capacity is based on a conservative estimate of the annual generation of low-level waste, without credit for potential waste minimization techniques and methods other than dewatering. In the event that an offsite facility is not available to accept Class B and C waste, a waste minimization plan will also be implemented. This plan will include strategies to reduce generation of Class B and C waste. . . . Good fuel performance will also reduce fission products in the reactor and spent fuel pool water, and hence the volume of Class B and C waste generated. Implementation of these techniques

could substantially extend the capacity of the Class B and C storage area in the Radwaste Building.

Amended COLA, FSAR § 11.4.1. Thus, Dominion has *not* taken credit for improved fuel performance. All the amended COLA states is that, if there is good fuel performance, the Radwaste Building's capacity to store Class B and C waste might be even longer than the 10 year period credited in the COLA. Therefore, BREDL's allegations do not in fact challenge the amended COLA or raise any genuine material concern.

Moreover, to the extent that BREDL may be challenging the estimated volume of Class B and C waste that will be generated, its claims are untimely and beyond the scope of this proceeding. Dominion's waste volume estimates are those provided in Table 11.4-2 of the ESBWR design certification document ("DCD"). Under the NRC rules, the Commission treats as resolved those issues resolved in connection with the issuance of a design certification. 10 C.F.R. § 52.63(a)(5). Further, the Commission has made it clear that any contention seeking to raise an issue on a design matter addressed in a design certification application should be resolved in the design certification rulemaking, not the COL proceeding. Statement of Policy on Conduct of New Reactor Licensing Proceedings, 73 Fed. Reg. 20,963, 20,972 (Apr. 17, 2008). Further, even if a challenge to the waste volumes estimated in the DCD were within the scope of this proceeding – which they are not – any challenge to these estimates would not be timely, as this information was available when Dominion's original COLA was filed. Thus, BREDL's claims regarding good fuel performance do not raise a material issue in dispute and fail to satisfy 10 C.F.R. §2.309(f)(1).

**C. Proposed Contention 10 Fails to Satisfy the New Contention Criteria of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2)**

In addition to failing to satisfy the requirements of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(1), Proposed Contention 10 should also be rejected as untimely and for failing to satisfy the criteria for a late-filed contention. At the outset, Dominion respectfully submits that, in the absence of any Board order establishing an alternative schedule for new contentions, any new contention challenging its amended COLA should have been filed within 10 days of BREDL's receipt of the COLA amendment. See 10 C.F.R. § 2.323(a) (requiring motions to be filed within 10 days of the occurrence giving rise to the motion). BREDL received Dominion's COLA Amendment on May 27, 2009. The amendment includes an eight-page mark-up of the COLA showing all revisions. BREDL has shown no cause for requiring a full month to file a new contention on a COLA amendment that affected only eight pages of the Application. BREDL provides no justification or precedent showing that this is a reasonable amount of time.<sup>6</sup> Proposed Contention 10 fails to satisfy the timeliness requirement of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2)(iii).

Further, two of BREDL's three claims in Proposed Contention 10 do not satisfy 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2)(i) because they are not based on any new information in the amended COLA. As discussed above, BREDL cannot claim that its assertion regarding disposal of LLRW is based on previously unavailable information, because it alleged the exact same issue, even using the same language, in Contention 1, which was filed on May 9, 2008. BREDL asserts no new information regarding disposal, nor does it make any new claims. Thus, its assertions regarding this issue fail to satisfy 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(f)(2)(i). The third part of Proposed Contention 10 is also not based on previously unavailable information. That part challenges

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<sup>6</sup> Further, BREDL had access to the information in the COLA amendment for much longer than a month. Dominion disclosed the GE report that described the LLRW storage space to BREDL on March 2, 2009 – nearly four months before BREDL filed Proposed Contention 10.

Dominion’s waste volume estimates, but, as discussed above, those estimates are included in the ESBWR DCD, which was available at the time that BREDL filed its original contentions.

**D. Proposed Contention 10 Does Not Satisfy the Late-Filed Contention Requirements of 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c)**

Under 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c)(2), a petitioner is required to “address the factors in paragraphs (c)(1)(i) through (c)(1)(viii) of this section in its nontimely filing.”<sup>7</sup> BREDL fails to address the late-filed criteria contained in 10 C.F.R. § 2.309(c), and this failure by itself is sufficient grounds to reject Proposed Contention 10. “[T]his omission provides an independent and sufficient basis for not admitting . . . belated contentions.” AmerGen Energy Co., LLC (Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station), LBP-06-11, 63 N.R.C. 391, 396 n.3 (2006) (citing Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. (Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, Units 1 and 2), CLI-98-25, 48 N.R.C. 325, 347 (1998)); see also Calvert Cliffs, CLI-98-25, 48 N.R.C. at 347 (stating that the Commission has summarily dismissed petitioners that failed to address the factors for a late-filed petition).

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<sup>7</sup> See note 2, supra.

### III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, BREDL's Motion should be denied.

Respectfully Submitted,

/signed electronically by David R. Lewis/

David R. Lewis  
Stefanie M. Nelson  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
2300 N Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 663-8474

Lillian M. Cuoco  
Senior Counsel  
Dominion Resources Services, Inc.  
120 Tredegar Street, RS-2  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 819-2684

Counsel for Dominion

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy the foregoing “Dominion’s Answer Opposing BREDL’s Contention 10,” dated July 21, 2009, was provided to the Electronic Information Exchange for service to those individuals on the service list in this proceeding, this 21st day of July 2009.

Ronald M. Spritzer, Esq. Chair  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel  
Mail Stop - T-3 F23  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [rms4@nrc.gov](mailto:rms4@nrc.gov)

Dr. Richard F. Cole  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel  
Mail Stop - T-3 F23  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [rfc1@nrc.gov](mailto:rfc1@nrc.gov)

Dr. Alice C. Mignerey  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel  
Mail Stop - T-3 F23  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [acm3@nrc.gov](mailto:acm3@nrc.gov)

Alan S. Rosenthal, Esq.  
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel  
Mail Stop - T-3 F23  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [rsnthl@comcast.net](mailto:rsnthl@comcast.net)

Secretary  
Att’n: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff  
Mail Stop O-16 C1  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [secy@nrc.gov](mailto:secy@nrc.gov) ; [hearingdocket@nrc.gov](mailto:hearingdocket@nrc.gov)

Office of Commission Appellate  
Adjudication  
Mail Stop O-16 C1  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [ocaamail@nrc.gov](mailto:ocaamail@nrc.gov)

Louis A. Zeller  
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League  
P.O. Box 88  
Glendale Springs, NC 28629  
E-mail: [BREDL@skybest.com](mailto:BREDL@skybest.com)

Sarah B. Kirkwood, Esq.  
Jody C. Martin, Esq.  
Marcia Carpentier, Esq.  
Office of the General Counsel  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001  
E-mail: [Sara.Kirkwood@nrc.gov](mailto:Sara.Kirkwood@nrc.gov);  
[Jody.Martin@nrc.gov](mailto:Jody.Martin@nrc.gov);  
[Marcia.Carpentier@nrc.gov](mailto:Marcia.Carpentier@nrc.gov)

North Carolina Utilities Commission  
Louis S. Watson, Jr.  
Senior Staff Attorney  
4325 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-4325  
E-mail: [swatson@ncuc.net](mailto:swatson@ncuc.net)

James Patrick Guy II, Esq.  
LeClairRyan  
4201 Dominion Boulevard, Suite 200  
Glen Allen, VA 23060  
E-mail: [James.Guy@leclairryan.com](mailto:James.Guy@leclairryan.com)

/signed electronically by David R. Lewis/  
David R. Lewis