

November 8, 2010

Kathy Boydston, Leader  
Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, TX 78744

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION AND REQUEST FOR CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION  
IN THE SCOPING PROCESS FOR THE VICTORIA COUNTY STATION EARLY  
SITE PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Ms. Boydston:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by Exelon Nuclear Holdings Texas, LLC (Exelon) for an early site permit (ESP) for the Victoria County Station (VCS) site near Victoria, TX. As part of the review of this ESP application, the NRC staff is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) as required by Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 51, the NRC regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is a cooperating agency for preparation of the EIS. The EIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental matters including those involving endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted to initiate consultation under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1934, as amended.

Exelon submitted the VCS ESP application on March 25, 2010, pursuant to NRC requirements in 10 CFR Part 52. The NRC staff accepted the application for docketing on June 07, 2010. It is available through the web-based version of the NRC Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), which can be found at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The environmental report (ER) portion of the application is listed under accession number ML101120186. The VCS ESP application is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/esp/victoria.html>.

The VCS site is located on approximately 11,532 undeveloped acres (classified as rangeland, forestland, or wetland), approximately 13.3 miles south of Victoria, TX. Linn Lake is located along a portion of the site's eastern boundary, while further east, the Guadalupe River angles toward the site (approximately 3 miles east of the northern tip of the site, but less than 0.25 miles east of the southeastern corner of the site). Exelon estimates that 7,129 acres of this site will be disturbed during the preparation and construction phase of the project. Of this total about 6,345 acres will be permanently dedicated to the reactors and their supporting facilities including a 5,785-acre cooling water basin. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the site map.

The proposed cooling system consists of a closed-cycle circuit where heated circulating water from the main condensers would be discharged to the 5,785-acre cooling basin functioning as the normal power heat sink. After transversing the cooling basin, the cooled water would be withdrawn from the cooling basin and recirculated back to the main condensers, thereby completing the closed cycle. Make up water to replace cooling basin water losses due to evaporation, seepage, or blowdown would be supplied from the Guadalupe River (estimated to be about 75,000 acre-feet per year). For some non-passive reactor technologies discussed in the ESP, mechanical draft cooling towers would be utilized in the closed-cycle circuit just prior to discharge to the cooling basin.

Exelon has identified the need for new transmission line corridors. The siting area for new transmission lines will include Victoria and Jackson Counties, TX. The exact routes of the new corridors are currently unknown; however, Exelon has provided probable route characteristics using a macro-corridor approach that outlines options for transmission line routes.

An ESP allows an applicant to set aside a site for potential future construction of one or more new nuclear power plants, and provides the opportunity to resolve site safety and environmental issues before construction begins. The EIS will document the NRC staff's determination regarding the suitability of the proposed site for construction and operation of one or more new nuclear units. If approved, the ESP would not authorize the applicant to begin construction of the unit(s). However, in its review the NRC staff will evaluate the environmental impacts of construction and operation and will also consider alternatives, including alternative sites.

To support preparation of the NRC EIS on the proposed action, NRC staff requests your office provide information on State-listed, proposed, and candidate species and protected habitat that may be in the vicinity of the VCS site (Victoria County), the alternative sites (Austin, Henderson, and Matagorda Counties), and the associated transmission line rights-of-way (Jackson and Victoria Counties). In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the FWCA.

The NRC staff plans to hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on December 2, 2010, at the Community Center Dome located at 2905 E. North Street, Victoria, TX 77901. The first meeting will convene at 1:00 p.m., and will continue until approximately 4:00 p.m. The second meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the first meeting and will continue until approximately 10:00 p.m. The NRC will present an overview of the environmental review process and will describe how the process will be implemented for the review of the VCS ESP application. A separate NRC meeting notice with a more detailed agenda will be forthcoming. Each meeting will be preceded by an open house from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., respectively, during which members of the public may meet and talk with NRC staff members on an informal basis. In addition, NRC staff and contractors are planning an onsite visit in spring 2011 for a site audit to discuss with Exelon the detailed information used to prepare the ER, to perform a tour of the site and its environs, and to review documentation. You and your staff are invited to attend both the public meetings and the site audit.

K. Boydston

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Please provide any information, comments, or concerns you feel are appropriate on the scope of the proposed action during this scoping comment period, which ends on January 03, 2011. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001 or via e-mail to [VICTORIA.ESPEIS@nrc.gov](mailto:VICTORIA.ESPEIS@nrc.gov). When the NRC staff completes the draft EIS on the proposed action, the staff plans to send the draft EIS to your office for comment. The anticipated publication date for the draft EIS is August 2012.

If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff's environmental review of this ESP application, please contact Ms. Tomeka Terry, Environmental Project Manager at 301-415-1488 or via e-mail to [Tomeka.Terry@nrc.gov](mailto:Tomeka.Terry@nrc.gov), or Ms. Alicia Williamson at 301-415-1878, or via email to [Alicia.Williamson@nrc.gov](mailto:Alicia.Williamson@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Ryan Whited, Chief  
Environmental Projects Branch 2  
Division of Site and Environmental Reviews  
Office of New Reactors

Docket No.: 52-042

Enclosure:  
As Stated

cc w/o Enclosure:  
See next page

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Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Ryan Whited, Chief  
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 Office of New Reactors

Docket No.: 52-042

Enclosure:  
 As Stated

cc w/o Enclosure:  
 See next page

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(Revised 08/24/2010)

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