

June 17, 2010

The Honorable George Wickliffe, Chief  
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee  
P.O. Box 746  
Tahlequah, OK 74464

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON  
THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED  
GENERAL ELECTRIC-HITACHI LASER-BASED URANIUM ENRICHMENT  
FACILITY NEAR WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Dear Chief Wickliffe:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by General Electric-Hitachi (GEH) Global Laser Enrichment LLC (GLE) for a license to construct and operate a uranium enrichment facility on the existing General Electric Company site near Wilmington, North Carolina (Wilmington Site). The facility, if licensed, would use a laser-based technology to enrich the isotope uranium-235 in uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) up to 8 percent by weight for use in fuel for nuclear power plants. As part of the review of the proposed action, the NRC has prepared the enclosed Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (NUREG-1938). The DEIS includes analysis of relevant environmental issues, including potential impacts to historic and cultural resources, and documents the NRC staff's determination regarding the environmental impacts from the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed uranium enrichment facility.

By letter dated September 2, 2009, the NRC staff requested your comment on the proposed project and specifically asked if any areas on the Wilmington site have traditional religious or cultural significance to the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee. By letter received November 23, 2009, your office indicated that the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee had no objection to the project but would like to be notified if any remains, artifacts, or other items were inadvertently discovered.

In response to your November 23, 2009 letter, the NRC staff is forwarding the DEIS for your review and comment. The NRC staff will address your comments in the final environmental impact statement. We are requesting your comments. In the context of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, under which the DEIS was prepared, the NRC staff's preliminary determination is that the impacts on historical and archaeological resources from the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed uranium enrichment facility at the Wilmington site would be small to moderate. The impacts are expected to be small to moderate because no National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) – eligible sites are expected to be affected by the undertaking. The impacts may range to moderate because operations at the proposed GLE facility could affect a Middle Woodland archaeological site (31NH801) if the facility or roads and ancillary structures associated with the facility are expanded in the future. Impact levels could be reduced to small if a plan to protect site 31NH801 is developed and implemented. Please provide any information, comments, or concerns you may have on the DEIS during the comment period, which ends August 9, 2010.

Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop TWB-05-B01M, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to [GLE.EIS@nrc.gov](mailto:GLE.EIS@nrc.gov).

The NRC staff plans to hold two public meetings to discuss the analysis and results of the DEIS on Thursday, July 22, 2010, in Ballroom 5 of the Warwick Center at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, North Carolina, 28403. The first meeting will convene at 2:30 p.m. and will continue until 5:00 p.m., as necessary. The second meeting will convene at 7:30 p.m., with a repeat of the overview portions of the first meeting, and will continue until 10:00 p.m., as necessary. The meetings will be transcribed and will include the following agenda items: (1) a brief presentation summarizing the NRC licensing review, (2) a presentation of the contents of the DEIS, and (3) an opportunity for interested government agencies, organizations, and individuals to provide comments on the draft report. Additionally, the NRC staff will host informal discussions 1 hour before the start of each meeting during which members of the public may meet and talk with NRC staff members informally. You and your staff are invited to attend.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Jennifer Davis, Senior Environmental Project Manager, by phone at 301-415-3835, or by e-mail at [Jennifer.Davis@nrc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Davis@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Kevin Hsueh, Chief  
Environmental Review Branch B  
Environmental Protection  
and Performance Assessment Directorate  
Division of Waste Management  
and Environmental Protection  
Office of Federal and State Materials  
and Environmental Management Programs

Docket No.: 70-7016

Enclosure: Draft EIS

cc: See next page

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Sincerely,

Kevin Hsueh, Chief  
Environmental Review Branch B  
Environmental Protection  
and Performance Assessment Directorate  
Division of Waste Management  
and Environmental Protection  
Office of Federal and State Materials  
and Environmental Management Programs

Docket No.: 70-7016

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DATE	06/ /10	06/15 /10	06/16 /10	06/17/10	06/17 /10

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cc with enclosure:

Ms. Lisa C. Stopp, Tribal Historic  
Preservation Officer  
P.O. Box 746  
Tahlequah, OK 74465

cc without enclosure:

William Szymanski/DOE	Bruce Shell/New Hanover County
Patricia Campbell/GEH	Marty Lawing/Brunswick County
Robert Brown/GEH	George Brown/Pender County
Tammy Orr/GEH	Bill Saffo/Wilmington
Mike Giles/CFC	Malissa Talbert/Wilmington
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