



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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In Reply Refer To:

2010-I-0417

JUN 29 2010

Bo Pham, Chief
Project Branch 1, Division of License Renewal
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Dear Mr. Pham:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your December 23, 2009 request for information on the presence of federally listed endangered and threatened species in the vicinity of the existing Salem and Hope Creek Generating Stations located on Artificial Island in Lower Alloways Creek Township, Salem County, New Jersey. PSEG Nuclear LLC (PSEG) has applied to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for renewal of the operating licenses for these plants, which expire in 2016 (Salem Unit 1), 2020 (Salem Unit 2), and 2026 (Hope). License renewal would extend the operating period of each reactor for an additional 20 years.

This letter addresses federally listed species in the vicinity of the Salem and Hope plants as well as four existing 500-kV transmission lines that emanate from the plants and extend along southern Salem, Gloucester, and Camden Counties in New Jersey and into New Castle County in Delaware. The proposed relicensing would not involve any expansion of existing facilities, structural modifications or other refurbishments, or change in existing management practices for the plants or the lines. This response has been coordinated with the Service's Chesapeake Bay Field Office regarding the portion of one transmission line that cross into Delaware. This response does not address all Service concerns for wildlife resources, nor any proposals for construction of new or expanded facilities.

AUTHORITY

This response is pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA) to ensure the protection of federally listed endangered and threatened species. These comments do not preclude separate review and comments by the Service pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (83 Stat. 852; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*); the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (54 Stat. 250; 16 U.S.C. 668-668d); or the December 22, 1993 Memorandum of Agreement among the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), and the Service, if project implementation requires a permit from the NJDEP pursuant to the New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9B *et seq.*).

FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES

Via letter to PSEG dated September 9, 2009 (enclosed), the Service indicated that no federally listed species under Service jurisdiction are known to occur in the vicinity of the existing Salem or Hope Generating Stations.

Known occurrences and other areas of potential habitat for the federally listed (threatened) swamp pink (*Helonias bullata*), and areas of potential habitat for the federally listed (threatened) bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*), occur along the Hope Creek/Salem to New Freedom and Salem to New Freedom South transmission lines.

Via letter dated October 23, 2009, PSEG adopted several conservation measures to avoid adverse effects to federally listed and candidate species from maintenance practices (including State-mandated vegetation control) along its transmission system throughout New Jersey, including the four transmission lines emanating from the Salem and Hope Creek Generating Stations. Based on these conservation measures, the Service concurred that PSEG's continued maintenance of its transmission lines in New Jersey is not likely to adversely affect federally listed or candidate species (see enclosed letter dated November 4, 2009).

The Service recommends inclusion of all adopted conservation measures in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and as conditions of any renewed NRC license.

OTHER SERVICE CONCERNS

Please see our September 9, 2009 letter for Service recommendations regarding the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and migratory birds.

CONCLUSION

The Service recommends inclusion of PSEG's adopted conservation measures for transmission line maintenance in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and as conditions of any renewed NRC license. We appreciate NRC's attention to our recommendations to protect the bald eagle and migratory birds.

Please contact Wendy Walsh at (609) 383-3938, extension 48, if you have any questions or require further assistance regarding federally listed threatened or endangered species.

Sincerely,



Ron Popowski
Assistant Supervisor