



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 13, 2011

Mr. Ashok S. Bhatnagar
Senior Vice President
Nuclear Generation Development
and Construction
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2801

SUBJECT: WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 2 – STATUS OF OPERATING LICENSE
APPLICATION REVIEW AND PROJECT SCHEDULE IMPLICATIONS
(TAC NO. ME0853)

Dear Mr. Bhatnagar:

I am writing to share with you the status on certain facets of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's review of your operating license application for Watts Bar Nuclear Plant (WBN), Unit 2. The staff's ability to continue or complete these reviews is directly controlled by the availability of the information provided by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). In particular, the staff has been constrained in its review by the lack of sufficient information from TVA in areas relating to (a) radioactive waste management, (b) fire protection program, (c) accident and transient analyses, including dose consequences, and (d) environmental impacts. As a result, the staff's ability to finish the licensing and inspection activities on a schedule to meet the project milestone for fuel-load readiness by April 2012 is challenged.

As part of its review process, the staff identified the need for additional information on the WBN Unit 2 Final Safety Analysis Report (FSAR). In a number of areas, including those addressed above, TVA has had difficulty providing responses to our requests for additional information (RAIs) with the necessary quality, consistency, completeness, and timeliness of the information to address the staff's questions or comments. Although the staff has held a number of meetings with TVA to facilitate the resolution of identified issues, we continue to experience delays in obtaining the complete information.

In a letter to you on April 1, 2011, on the status of the review of FSAR Chapter 11, "Radioactive Waste Management," we noted that TVA had contracted to have a third-party assess the current licensing documentation and identify potential problems for resolution, including any inconsistencies in the information presented between the FSAR and the supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS). This assessment is scheduled to be completed before the end of April 2011; after which, TVA would submit changes, as needed, to its original documentation.

Regarding the fire protection program review, TVA similarly had a third-party assess the information previously presented to support this area. On the basis of this assessment and in response to continuing questions from the staff, TVA is updating the major sections of the fire protection report and superseding some of the information originally submitted. TVA needs to

meet the established period of time requested for any response to our RAIs to minimize any further impact on the schedule to complete this area of the review.

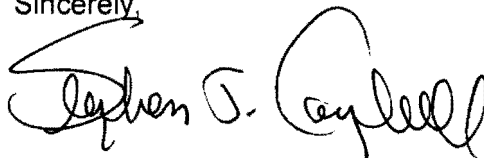
Although TVA has recently provided information to clarify portions of the FSAR describing the accident and transient analyses, questions were raised by the staff during a recent audit that will require a response from TVA. In addition, our review of the dose consequence evaluations for these transients is constrained by the need for additional information. TVA needs to continue to expedite its responses to the RAIs in order to facilitate the completion of the review and to document the results in the safety evaluation report, which is needed to support a briefing in this area for the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards.

Lastly, TVA has recently provided supplemental information in support of its EIS. However, a response remains to be submitted to address staff concerns regarding severe accident mitigation design alternatives (SAMDA). Your current schedule calls for providing this information in late May 2011. The NRC staff must consider the alternative of plant operations with the installation of SAMDAs in its review to ensure that plant changes with the potential for improving severe accident safety performance are identified and evaluated. Thus, the receipt of the remaining SAMDA information poses a constraint on the completion of the staff's supplement to the environmental statement.

As a result of these issues, the NRC staff is not in a position to accurately assess the impact on each of the related project review activities, which we find as critical to the completion of the reviews and the determination of an accurate project schedule. Upon submission of the information needed to continue the review, the NRC staff will be in a better position to establish the impacts on the overall project completion schedule.

Therefore, we request your continued attention in support of the thorough and timely submission for the NRC staff to complete its licensing reviews and inspections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen J. Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Stephen J. Campbell, Chief
Watts Bar Special Projects Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-391

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Sincerely,

/RA/

Stephen J. Campbell, Chief
Watts Bar Special Projects Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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