

GEOTHERMAL ENERGY INSTITUTE

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March 20, 1974

Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D.C. 20545

RE: AEC Dkt. Nos. 40-438, 50-439
Bellefonte Nuclear Plant
Jackson County, Alabama

Gentlemen:

May we comment on the alternative energy sources section of the February 1974 draft environmental statement prepared by your staff with respect of two proposed 1221 MW nuclear power plants scheduled for 1979-1980 operation.

In our opinion the summary statement that "The staff does not consider geothermal energy as a viable energy source on the TVA system" (page 9-3) is not an adequate independent assessment of geothermal alternatives required by NEPA and the Commission's own rules.

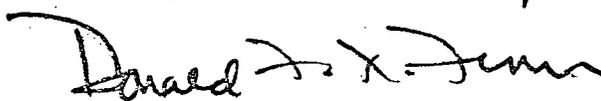
This opinion is unsupported by factual data or analysis and is buttressed merely by reference to the applicant's self-serving statement that "The potential for geothermal power is very low and no sites have been identified to date in the TVA system."

No reference is made to the significant geothermal - geopressured potential of the Gulf Coast which is quite significant as Hon. John Nassikas, Chairman of the Federal Power Commission, recently pointed out in testimony to the Congress.

In our opinion there is no factual basis supporting the staff's opinion, and it is one which cannot be intelligently reviewed.

We also believe that the staff's comments on "other energy sources" on page 9-4 are also inadequate. We do not believe that the mere "review of current literature" (i.e., three references: the 1970 National Power Survey, a 1972 Interior pamphlet, and a 1973 paper by S. Baron) is an adequate basis on which to judge new energy conversion methods.

Very truly yours,


Donald F.X. Finn
Managing Director

DF/jm

cc: Hon. John J. Sparkman, Senator, State of Alabama
Hon. James B. Allen, Senator, State of Alabama
Hon. Robert E. Jones, Representative, Jackson County