



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

August 23, 2011

Ms. Robyn Thorson, Regional Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Pacific Region  
911 NE 11th Ave  
Portland, OR 97232

SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR INFORMAL SECTION 7 CONSULTATION  
RELATED TO THE LICENSE RENEWAL OF COLUMBIA GENERATING  
STATION

Dear Ms. Thorson:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has completed the enclosed draft Supplement 47 to NUREG-1437, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants," to evaluate the proposed renewal of the Columbia Generating Station (CGS) operating license for a period of an additional 20 years. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the NRC's biological assessment for license renewal of CGS is included in Appendix D-1 of the enclosed draft supplemental environmental impact statement.

CGS is located in Benton County, Washington, 12.5 miles northwest of Richland. CGS is equipped with a closed-cycle heat dissipation system that withdraws makeup water from, and discharges that water to, the Columbia River from six mechanical draft cooling towers. The plant is operated by Energy Northwest.

In a letter dated March 22, 2010<sup>1</sup>, the NRC requested that your office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) provide the NRC with information on Federally listed endangered or threatened, proposed, and candidate species, as well as any designated critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of CGS and its associated transmission line rights-of-way. This letter initiated informal section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The FWS responded in an e-mail dated November 8, 2010<sup>2</sup>, and identified a single aquatic species—the bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*)—under its jurisdiction that is Federally listed as threatened and has been reported in the Hanford Reach in the vicinity of the CGS facility. Further, the FWS indicated that critical habitat for the bull trout occurred within the action area, as previously defined. Because the NRC did not prepare its biological assessment within the 180-day timeframe specified at Title 50 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (50 CFR) 402.12(i), the NRC confirmed the accuracy of the species list in an e-mail to FWS on June 15, 2011. The FWS responded on June 16, 2011, confirming that the bull trout was the only listed species in the area under the NRC's review.

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<sup>1</sup> [NRC] U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. 2010. Letter from Pham B, Branch Chief, to Thorson R, Pacific Regional Director, FWS. Subject: Request for list of species for Columbia Generating Station license renewal application review. March 22, 2010. ADAMS No. ML100710046.

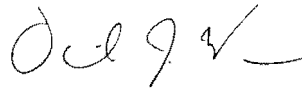
<sup>2</sup> [FWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. E-mail from Kurz GL, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, to Doyle D, Project Manager, NRC. Subject: Columbia Generating Station license renewal. November 8, 2010. ADAMS No. ML103120486.

The NRC's biological assessment provides an evaluation of the potential impact of renewing the CGS operating license for an additional 20 years of operation on the bull trout and its critical habitat. In the biological assessment, the NRC concludes that continued operation of CGS will have **no effect** on the bull trout.

The other species from the list potentially occurring in the vicinity of the plant are addressed in Section 2.2.7.1 (page 2-44), and Section 4.7.2 (page 4-10).

We are requesting your concurrence with our determination within 30 days per 50 CFR 402.12(j). In reaching our conclusion, the NRC staff relied on information provided by your office, information provided by the applicant, and on research performed by NRC staff. Please note that the comment period ends on November 16, 2011. If you have any questions regarding this issue or the staff's request, please contact Daniel Doyle, environmental project manager, or Dennis Logan, aquatic biologist. Mr. Doyle can be reached at 301-415-3748 or [Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov). Mr. Logan can be reached at 301-415-0490 or [Dennis.Logan@nrc.gov](mailto:Dennis.Logan@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,



David J. Wrona, Chief  
Projects Branch 2  
Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-397

Enclosure:  
As stated

cc w/encl: Listserv

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ENERGY NORTHWEST

COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION

DOCKET NUMBER 50-397

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT SUPPLEMENT 47 TO THE GENERIC  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF NUCLEAR PLANTS  
AND PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR THE LICENSE RENEWAL OF  
COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION

[NRC-2010-0029]

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has published a draft plant-specific supplement to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants (GEIS), NUREG-1437, regarding the renewal of operating license NPF-21 for an additional 20 years of operation for Columbia Generating Station. Columbia Generating Station is located in Richland, Washington. Possible alternatives to the proposed action (license renewal) include no action and reasonable alternative energy sources.

Any interested party may submit comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS for consideration by the NRC staff. To be considered, comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS and the proposed action must be received by November 16, 2011. The NRC staff is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by any one of the following methods. Please include Docket ID **NRC-2010-0029** in the subject line of your comments. Comments submitted in writing or in electronic form will be posted on the NRC website and on the Federal rulemaking

website <http://www.regulations.gov>. Because your comments will not be edited to remove any identifying or contact information, the NRC cautions you against including any information in your submission that you do not want to be publicly disclosed.

The NRC requests that any party soliciting or aggregating comments received from other persons for submission to the NRC inform those persons that the NRC will not edit their comments to remove any identifying or contact information, and, therefore, they should not include any information in their comments that they do not want publicly disclosed.

**Federal Rulemaking Website:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for documents filed under Docket ID **NRC-2010-0029**. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher at 301-492-3668 or by e-mail at [Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov](mailto:Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov).

**Mail comments to:** Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch (RADB), Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Faxes may be sent to RADB at 301-492-3446.

You can access publicly available documents related to this notice using the following methods:

**NRC's Public Document Room (PDR):** The public may examine and have copied, for a fee, publicly available documents at the NRC's PDR, Public File Area O-1F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

**NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** Publicly available documents created or received at the NRC are available electronically at the NRC's Electronic Reading Room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. From this website, the public can gain entry into ADAMS, which provides text and image files of NRC's public documents. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the NRC's PDR reference staff at 1-800-397-4209,

301-415-4737, or by e-mail at [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov). The Accession Number for draft Supplement 47 to the GEIS is ML11227A007.

**Federal Rulemaking Website:** Public comments and supporting materials related to this notice can be found at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for Docket ID **NRC-2010-0029**.

In addition, a copy of the draft supplement to the GEIS is available to local residents near the site at the Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Drive, Richland, Washington 99352 and at the Kennewick Branch of Mid-Columbia Libraries, 1620 South Union Street, Kennewick, Washington 99338.

All comments received by the NRC, including those made by Federal, State, and local agencies; Native American Tribes; or other interested persons, will be made available electronically at the NRC's PDR in Rockville, Maryland, and through ADAMS. Comments received after the due date will be considered only if it is practical to do so.

The NRC staff will hold public meetings prior to the close of the public comment period to present an overview of the draft plant-specific supplement to the GEIS and to accept public comments on the document. Two meetings will be held at the Red Lion Hotel, 802 George Washington Way, Richland, Washington, on Tuesday, September 27, 2011. The first session will convene at 2:00 p.m. and will continue until 5:00 p.m., as necessary. The second session will convene at 7:00 p.m. and will continue until 10:00 p.m., as necessary. The meetings will be transcribed and will include: (1) a presentation of the contents of the draft plant-specific supplement to the GEIS and (2) the opportunity for interested government agencies, organizations, and individuals to provide comments on the draft report. Additionally, the NRC staff will host informal discussions one hour prior to the start of each session at the same location. No comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS will be accepted during the informal discussions. To be considered, comments must be provided either at the transcribed public meeting or in writing. Persons may pre-register to attend or present oral comments at the

meeting by contacting Mr. Daniel Doyle, the NRC Environmental Project Manager, at 1-800-368-5642, extension 3748, or by e-mail at Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov no later than Friday, September 23, 2011. Members of the public may also register to provide oral comments within 15 minutes of the start of each session. Individual oral comments may be limited by the time available, depending on the number of persons who register. If special equipment or accommodations are needed to attend or present information at the public meeting, the need should be brought to Mr. Doyle's attention no later than September 23, 2011, to provide the NRC staff adequate notice to determine whether the request can be accommodated.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Mr. Daniel Doyle, Division of License Renewal, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Mail Stop O-11F1, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Mr. Doyle may be contacted at the aforementioned telephone number or e-mail address.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of August 2011.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. J. Wrona", followed by a horizontal line.

David J. Wrona, Chief  
Projects Branch 2  
Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Sincerely,

*/RA/*

David J. Wrona, Chief  
Projects Branch 2  
Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-397

Enclosure:  
As stated

cc w/encl: Listserv

**DISTRIBUTION:**

See next page

**ADAMS Accession Nos.:**

Package: ML11161A002

Letter: ML11161A003

FRN: ML11091A028

GEIS for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Supplement 47: ML11227A007

\*concurrence via email

OFFICE	LA: DLR*	PM:DLR/RPB1	GS:DLR/RERB	GS:DLR/RERB	OGC	BC:DLR/RPB2
NAME	lKing	DDoyle	ATravers	DLogan (BBalsam for)	LSubin	DWrona
DATE	06/14/2011	06/17/2011	06/21/2011	06/29/2011	07/12/2011	08/23/2011

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Letter to Robyn Thorson from David J. Wrona dated August 23, 2011

**SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR INFORMAL SECTION 7 CONSULTATION  
RELATED TO THE LICENSE RENEWAL OF COLUMBIA GENERATING  
STATION**

**DISTRIBUTION:**

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