



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

November 29, 2011

Raymond Hernandez
Cultural Preservation Officer
Tap Pilam-Coahuiltecan Nation
American Indians in Texas
1313 Guadalupe Street, Suite 104
San Antonio, TX 78207

SUBJECT: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2, LICENSE RENEWAL
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Dear Mr. Hernandez:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) would like to thank you for your letter dated April 1, 2011, sent in response to the NRC's request for comments concerning the proposed license renewal of South Texas Project (STP) and the associated environmental review. The NRC values the importance of establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with the Tap Pilam-Coahuiltecan Nation. Accordingly, the NRC would like to address the concerns identified in your comment letter.

In your letter, you raised a concern about missing archaeological data in the applicant's environmental report (ER). In response, the NRC issued a request for additional information (RAI), and the STP Nuclear Operating Company has provided the NRC (documented in the enclosed letter dated July 5, 2011) with additional data and documentation on the three cultural sites mentioned in Attachment D of the ER. The NRC finds the new data to be sufficient for both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review. In addition, the environmental review will consider the potential effects on historical French and Spanish colonial settlements from activities associated with STP operation during the period of extended operation. The staff will document its review in Sections 2, 4, and 8 of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

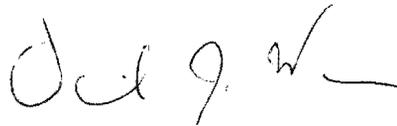
In response to your concern about "a nuclear disaster similar to the one occurring in Japan" and the prospect of inaccessibility "to the cultural roots and ties to the land," the NRC is responsible for licensing and regulating the operation of nuclear power plants to ensure the protection of public health and safety and the environment. The safe operation of nuclear power plants is not limited to license renewal. The NRC ensures safe operation of nuclear power plants on an ongoing basis at every nuclear power plant. The NRC performs safety inspections throughout the operating life of the plant, whether during the current or renewed operating license period.

For your information, the NRC near-term task force review of insights from the Fukushima Dai-Ichi accident is documented in a report entitled "Recommendations for Enhancing Reactor Safety in the 21st Century." This report can be found on the internet at: <http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML1118/ML111861807.pdf>.

On July 12, 2011, the task force issued this report (ML111861807) and then the NRC staff presented its recommendations to the Commission on July 19, 2011. As part of the short-term review, the task force concluded that, while improvements [safety enhancements] are expected to be made as a result of the lessons learned from the events in Japan, the continued operation of nuclear power plants and licensing activities for new plants do not pose an imminent risk to public health and safety. In the meantime, the NRC will continue to oversee and monitor nuclear power plants to ensure that U.S. reactors remain safe. Additional information about what the NRC is doing to ensure the continued protection of health and safety at U.S. nuclear power plants following the events in Japan can be found at <http://www.nrc.gov/japan/japan-info.html>.

Again, thank you for your comments. These and other comments received during the public scoping period will be addressed in the DSEIS for license renewal of STP. The DSEIS is scheduled to be published in 2012 and will be provided to you for comment. If you need additional information regarding the STP environmental review process or this letter, please contact Tam Tran, Project Manager, at 301-415-3617 or by e-mail at Tam.Tran@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,



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

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/encl.: Listserv



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No. 11-126

July 12, 2011

OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT THE BRIEFING ADDRESSING THE IRRS REPORT

Good morning. The Commission meets today to discuss the recommendations and suggestions of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission. As a longtime supporter of the IRRS, we were pleased to have the opportunity to host the mission last October and look forward to hosting the follow-up mission and completing the IRRS process.

In response to the IRRS report, the NRC staff has developed an action plan to address the recommendations and suggestions included in the IRRS report. I want to commend the staff for their excellent work in developing this detailed plan, as well as their efforts throughout this process. This plan provides a strong foundation for our work ahead, including – as the staff notes in the action plan – the need to incorporate lessons learned from the Fukushima accident into our follow-up activities.

As the NRC and other regulators seek to learn and apply the lessons of Fukushima, I believe these peer review activities have an important role to play in facilitating the open exchange of information and experience, and ultimately in strengthening nuclear safety worldwide.

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Sincerely,

/RA/

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

Docket Nos. 50-498 and 50-499

Enclosure:
As stated
cc w/encl: Listserv

ADAMS Accession No.: ML11269A112

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NAME	IKing	TTran	Almboden (JSusco for)	TTran	DWrona
DATE	9/28/11	9/29/11	10/19/11	11/29/11	11/29/11

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Letter to R. Hernandez from D. Wrona dated November 29, 2011

SUBJECT: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2, LICENSE RENEWAL
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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