



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

November 2, 2011

Ms. Mary E. Jennings
Field Supervisor
Tennessee Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
446 Neal Street
Cookeville, TN 38501

SUBJECT: WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT, UNIT 2 - BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR
SECTION 7 CONSULTATION RELATED TO THE OPERATING LICENSE
APPLICATION

Dear Ms. Jennings:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has completed the enclosed draft Supplement 2 to NUREG-0498, "Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of Watts Bar Nuclear Plant [WBN], Unit 2 – Draft Report for Comment," and the accompanying Biological Assessment that is included in Appendix F of the draft Supplement 2. The draft Supplement and Biological Assessment were prepared in response to the application from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for an operating license that would authorize TVA to possess, use, and operate a second light-water nuclear reactor at TVA's site in Rhea County, Tennessee. WBN Unit 1 has been in operation since 1996.

The original cooling system constructed for the WBN units was a closed-cycle system to transfer heat from the main condenser of each unit to the natural-draft cooling tower basin associated with that unit. Because the WBN cooling towers cannot remove the desired amount of heat from the condenser circulating water during certain times of the year, TVA added a supplemental condenser cooling water (SCCW) system. The SCCW system draws water from behind Watts Bar Dam and delivers it by gravity flow to the cooling tower basins. The SCCW system, which is currently used for Unit 1, will also be used for Unit 2.

In a letter dated September 2, 2009,¹ the NRC requested that your office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) provide the NRC with information on federally listed, proposed, and candidate species, as well as any designated critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of WBN and its associated transmission line rights-of-way, as well as any information that was considered appropriate under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. That letter initiated informal Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The FWS responded by letter dated October 9, 2009,² that provided a list of seven federally listed threatened and endangered species near the WBN site.

¹ NRC Letter, Joel Wiebe to Mary Jennings (FWS). Subject: Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 2 - Request for List of Protected Species Within the Area Under Evaluation for the Operating License Application Environmental Review. September 2, 2009. NRC Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) No. ML092100088.

² FWS letter, Mary Jennings to Joel Wiebe (NRC) Subject: FWS #2009-SL-0885. Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 2 - Request for list of Protected Species, Rhea County, Tennessee, October 9, 2009. ADAMS No. ML092930182.

M. E. Jennings

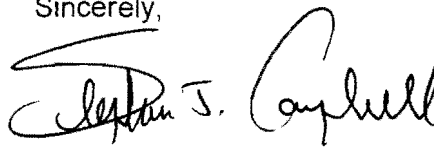
- 2 -

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, we are requesting your concurrence with our determination in the Biological Assessment included in Appendix F of the enclosed draft supplement, within 30 days per Title 50 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 402, section 12(j). In reaching the conclusions given in the Biological Assessment, the NRC staff relied on information provided by your office, information provided by the applicant, and on research performed by NRC staff.

In addition, we welcome your comments on the enclosed draft Supplement, in particular the sections related to terrestrial and aquatic ecology, specifically sections 2.3, 4.3, 4.14, and 5.5. Please note that the comment period on the draft Supplement ends on December 27, 2011.

If you have any questions regarding this issue or the staff's request, please contact Carmen Fells, Environmental Project Manager, or Dennis Logan, Aquatic Biologist. Ms. Fells can be reached at 301-415-6337 or Carmen.Fells@nrc.gov. Dr. Logan can be reached at 301-415-0490 or Dennis.Logan@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

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

Docket No. 50-391

Enclosure:
Draft NUREG-0498, Supplement 2

cc w/o encl: Distribution via Listserv

Letter to Mary E. Jennings from Stephen J. Campbell dated November 2, 2011

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENT TO THE FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT FOR WATTS BAR NUCLEAR PLANT UNIT 2
FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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RidsAcrcAcnw_MailCTR Resource
RidsOpaMail Resource
RidsOgcRp Resource
CFells, NRR

M. E. Jennings

- 2 -

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ADAMS Accession Nos:
Package: ML11304A083
Letter: ML11304A088
FR Notice: ML11299A161
Draft NUREG-0498, Supplement: ML11298A094 and ML11298A095

OFFICE	DORL/ LPWB/ PM	DORL/LPWB/ LA	DORL/LPWB/BC
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DATE	11/01/11	11/01/11	11/02/11

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