March 30, 2012

Mr. Scott Hicks, Field Office Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
East Lansing Michigan Field Office
2651 Coolidge Road, Suite 101
East Lansing, MI 48823-6316

SUBJECT: SUBMITTAL OF THE BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED ENRICO FERMI NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, UNIT 3

Dear Mr. Hicks:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by Detroit Edison Company (Detroit Edison) for a combined license (COL) for construction and operation of a new nuclear power plant, Enrico Fermi Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 3 (Fermi 3), at its Enrico Fermi Atomic Power Plant (Fermi) site in Monroe County, Michigan, approximately 24 miles northeast of Toledo, Ohio, and 30 miles southwest of Detroit, Michigan. As part of the review of this COL application, the NRC staff is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) as required by Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 51, the NRC's regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is participating with the NRC in the preparation of this EIS as a cooperating agency. The EIS includes an analysis of pertinent environmental matters including those involving endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. The NRC is submitting this letter and Biological Assessment as part of consultation initiated on December 23, 2008 (ML083151398), under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended.

Detroit Edison submitted the application for a COL for Fermi 3 on September 18, 2008, pursuant to NRC requirements in 10 CFR Part 52. The application is available through NRC's web-based Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), which can be found at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html. The latest version of Detroit Edison's Environmental Report (ER), which is Part 3 of the COL application, is listed under the accession number ML110600498. The Fermi 3 COL application is also available on the Internet at http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/col/fermi.html.

The Fermi site is located on approximately 1,260 acres along the western shore of Lake Erie. The Fermi site currently has one operating boiling water reactor, Fermi Nuclear Power Reactor Unit 2 (Fermi 2), which has the capacity to generate 1,089 megawatts of electricity. In addition, there is one non-operating reactor, Fermi Nuclear Power Reactor Unit 1, which has been defueled and is in the process of being decommissioned. Detroit Edison proposes to construct one new nuclear unit adjacent to the existing facilities in areas that have been previously disturbed and certain USACE regulated activities and structures associated with the project would occur in waters of the United States and adjacent wetlands..

The Fermi property is zoned as a Public Service District, which allows for power plant use. To support the Fermi 3 power plant, ITC *Transmission*, responsible for the transmission grid in southeastern Michigan, would have to build three new 345-kV transmission lines in a single corridor from the power plant to a substation in Milan, Michigan. The new transmission lines would be sited in portions of Monroe, southwest Wayne, and southeast Washtenaw Counties, Michigan.

The proposed cooling system is comprised of an intake structure and pipeline that extends into Lake Erie and circulating water systems throughout the plant. It allows for the loss of some water through heat dissipation into the atmosphere, and the discharge of water into Lake Erie. Approximately 34,000 gallons per minute would be withdrawn from Lake Erie during normal operations to make up losses from evaporation, drift, and blowdown. Waste heat would be dissipated to the atmosphere through a hyperbolic natural draft cooling tower. Blowdown from the cooling tower would be transported to an outfall that discharges into Lake Erie.

The NRC staff and USACE staff in its review, has evaluated the environmental impacts of construction and operation of Fermi 3, associated transmission lines, and alternatives, including alternative sites. NRC issued the draft EIS on October 28, 2011, and it is available on the NRC public Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/col/fermi.html.

To support the preparation of the NRC EIS on the proposed action, and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the ESA, the NRC and USACE communicated with Burr Fisher of your office, by teleconference on July 26, 2011, and in onsite meetings on August 8-9, 2011. During the teleconference and meetings, NRC and USACE personnel discussed information on Federally listed species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of the proposed Fermi 3 site and the associated transmission line rights-of-way. The NRC and the USACE have prepared this Biological Assessment to support a joint consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in accordance with the ESA, as amended.

Enclosed with this letter is the Biological Assessment that evaluates potential impacts to Federally listed species and habitats under the ESA. It also contains additional background information regarding the proposed Fermi 3 project.

If you have any questions concerning the enclosed Fermi 3 Biological Assessment, please contact Mr. Bruce Olson, Environmental Project Manager at 301-415-3731 or by email at Bruce.Olson@nrc.gov. In his absence, please contact Mr. John Fringer at 301-415-6208, or by email at John.Fringer@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Anthony H. Hsia, Chief
Environmental Projects Branch 2
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Office of New Reactors

Docket No.: 52-033

Enclosure:
As stated

cc w/o enclosure: See next page

If you have any questions concerning the enclosed Fermi 3 Biological Assessment, please contact Mr. Bruce Olson, Environmental Project Manager at 301-415-3731 or by email at Bruce.Olson@nrc.gov. In his absence, please contact Mr. John Fringer at 301-415-6208, or by email at John.Fringer@nrc.gov.

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Docket No.: 52-033

Enclosure:
As stated

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