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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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PRELIMINARY SITE-SPECIFIC RESULTS
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR
SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT LICENSE RENEWAL

+ + + + +
PUBLIC MEETING
AFTERNOON SESSION

+ + + + +
Tuesday, January 15, 2013

201 7th Street
Bay City, Texas

2:00 p.m.

ON BEHALF OF THE NRC:

SUSAN SALTER, Facilitator

OTHER NRC STAFF:

TAM TRAN

BINESH THARAKAN

DAVE WRONA

EMILY LARSON

LARA [USELDING]

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MS. SALTER: Welcome to the NRC's public
3 meeting. My name is Susan Salter, and I'm going to be
4 your facilitator for the meeting this afternoon. Bob
5 Hagar is going to be helping me facilitate, and our role
6 as facilitators is really just to help the meeting run
7 smoothly, keep us on time, make sure that everyone who's
8 come out to make a comment has an opportunity to do so.

9 A couple of housekeeping items: We are
10 having the meeting transcribed. Leslie Berridge is our
11 recorder, and to help Leslie get an accurate recording,
12 we ask you to help us with a couple of things.

13 One is to keep background noise or sidebar
14 conversations to a minimum. In addition, if you have
15 electronic devices, please put them on silent mode. If
16 you need to take a call, we certainly understand that and
17 just ask that you step outside of the meeting room to do
18 that.

19 Restrooms: If you go out this door to the
20 left, the first left is the women's room; straight is the
21 exit; and right next to the exit is the men's room. You
22 can also go to the right and there are some other
23 restrooms and exits out there, but I think the closest
24 one is to your left as you exit out of this room.

25 So let me get started by just restating the

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1 purpose of tonight's meeting, which is to present the
2 findings and collect public comment on the Draft
3 Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed renewal
4 of the South Texas Project nuclear power plant's
5 operating licenses for an additional 20 years.

6 Now, during this meeting you may hear
7 individuals refer to the Environmental Impact Statement
8 as the EIS or the DEIS, for Draft Environmental Impact
9 Statement, and I know NRC staff tries to keep those
10 abbreviations to a minimum, but those ones I'm sure will
11 probably creep up.

12 The agenda for the meeting this afternoon,
13 as well as the meeting tonight, which will begin at 7:00,
14 is to have a presentation by NRC staff, and following that
15 we'll have a very brief, maybe ten-minute, Q&A session.

16 And the reason for that is during the public
17 comment period, which will follow the Q&A, the NRC staff
18 is really in a listening mode so they don't engage in a
19 dialog with the public; they really just listen to the
20 public's comments. That's why they're here.

21 But to provide any clarifications on what
22 you may hear during the presentation or to answer any
23 questions on the NRC process, they want to give the public
24 about 10 or 15 minutes or so to ask those questions and
25 to get those clarifications.

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1 So I'll go over the process that we'll use
2 for the public comment period when we get to that point,
3 but just as a reminder, as I said, if you want to make
4 a comment, you do need to fill out a yellow card. Those
5 are helpful for Leslie to make sure we have accurate
6 spelling of your names.

7 So please, if you change your mind during
8 the meeting, if you haven't signed up yet, you can always
9 sign up during the meeting. Bob has cards as well. You
10 can raise your hand or get his attention and get a card
11 from him, fill it out, give it back to him.

12 So with that, I think I've covered all the
13 housekeeping items. I think I'm going to turn it over
14 to Tam Tran.

15 Tam is the project manager in the Division
16 of License Renewal in the NRC's office of Nuclear Reactor
17 Regulation, and he is going to provide the NRC
18 presentation for this afternoon.

19 MR. TRAN: Thank you, Susan. Thank you all
20 for taking the time to come to this meeting. My name is
21 Tam Tran; I'm the project manager for the environmental
22 review of the South Texas Project license renewal.

23 I hope the information we provide with this
24 presentation will help you to understand the process
25 we're going through, what we have done so far, and the

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1 role that you can play in helping us and make sure that
2 the Final Environmental Impact Statement is accurate.

3 With that, I would like to acknowledge a few
4 NRC staff here today. First of all, I would like to
5 acknowledge our South Texas Project resident inspector,
6 Binesh Tharakan. Next I would like to acknowledge our
7 branch chief for the Environmental Project Branch for
8 License Renewal, Dave Wrona.

9 Next Emily Larson's our social scientist
10 who contributes significant review to our draft
11 supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Also we
12 have today Lara [Uselding], who is from Region 4,
13 representing our regional office.

14 Next I would like to start off by briefly
15 going over the agenda for today's presentation. I will
16 explain the NRC license renewal process for nuclear power
17 plants, with emphasis on the environmental review
18 process, when we are going to present the preliminary
19 finding of our environmental review, which assesses the
20 impacts associated with extending the operating license
21 of the South Texas Project for an additional 20 years.

22 Then we'll give you some information about
23 the schedule for the balance of our review and how you
24 can submit comments in the future, and then finally
25 really the most important part of today's meeting is

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1 where we receive any comment that you may have for this
2 review.

3 Before I get into the discussion of license
4 renewal process, I would like to take a minute to talk
5 about the NRC in terms of what we do and what our mission
6 is.

7 The Atomic Energy Act authorizes the NRC to
8 regulate the civilian use of nuclear materials in the
9 United States, including the use of nuclear materials for
10 power production.

11 In exercising that authority, the NRC's
12 mission is threefold: To ensure adequate protection of
13 public health and safety, to promote the common defense
14 and security, and to protect the environment.

15 The NRC accomplishes its mission through a
16 combination of regulatory programs and processes, such
17 a reviewing license applications, conducting
18 inspections, issue enforcement actions, assessing
19 licensee performance, and evaluating operating
20 experience from nuclear plants across the country and
21 internationally.

22 The Atomic Energy Act is the legislation
23 that authorizes the NRC to issue licenses. The Atomic
24 Energy Act provides for a 40-year license term for power
25 reactors. This 40-year terms is based primarily on

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1 economic considerations and antitrust factors, not on
2 safety limitations of the plant.

3 NRC conducts license reviews for plants
4 whose owners wish to operate them beyond their initial
5 license period.

6 This slide gives an overview of the South
7 Texas Project license renewal process. The review
8 process involves two parallel paths: the safety review
9 and environmental review. For the purpose of today's
10 meeting, we will discuss the environmental review.

11 The staff environmental review consists of
12 the Generic Environmental Impact Statement and the
13 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The
14 Generic EIS examines the possible environmental impacts
15 that could occur as a result of renewing licenses of
16 nuclear power plants under 10 CFR Part 54.

17 The Generic EIS, to the extent possible,
18 established the bounds and significance of these
19 potential impacts. The analyses in the Generic EIS
20 encompasses all operating light-water power reactors.
21 These analyses attempt to establish a generic finding
22 covering as many plants as possible.

23 For some environmental issues the Generic
24 EIS found that the generic evaluation was not sufficient
25 and that a plant-specific analysis was required.

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1 To supplement the Generic EIS, the staff
2 conducted site-specific reviews of the South Texas
3 Project. The site-specific findings for South Texas
4 Project are contained in the Draft Supplemental
5 Environmental Impact Statement. This document contains
6 analyses of all appropriate site-specific issues as well
7 as a review of issues covered by the Generic EIS. This
8 is to determine whether the conclusions in the Generic
9 EIS are valid for South Texas Project.

10 In this process NRC staff also reviewed the
11 environmental impacts of potential power generation
12 alternatives to license renewal to determine whether or
13 not the impacts expected from the license renewal are
14 unreasonable.

15 Together the Generic EIS and the
16 Supplemental EIS form the staff's analysis of the impact
17 of the license renewal for South Texas Project.

18 This slide shows the approach that the staff
19 used for environmental analysis. The NRC evaluates
20 impacts of all plants across the entire country to
21 determine if there were impacts that were common to all
22 operating plants.

23 NRC looked at 92 separate impact areas and
24 found 69 issues. The impacts were the same for plants
25 with similar features. NRC called these Category 1

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1 issues and made the same, or generic, determinations
2 about the impacts in the Generic Environmental Impact
3 Statement for license renewal.

4 NRC was not able to make generic conclusions
5 about the remaining 23 issues. Twenty-one of these
6 issues, which the NRC called Category 2 issues, the NRC
7 decided to prepare site-specific supplements to the
8 Generic EIS that address these 21 issues.

9 For example, electromagnetic field acute
10 effects are electric shock associated with the
11 electrical lines at South Texas Project, is a Category
12 2 issue.

13 In addition, two issues are referred to as
14 not categorized, and therefore a site-specific analysis
15 is also needed.

16 The Supplemental Environmental Impact
17 Statement for South Texas Project license renewal is
18 being discussed today. The NRC did not rule out the
19 possibility that the generic conclusions in the Generic
20 EIS may not apply to any specific plant in all cases.

21 If new and significant information is found
22 that would change the generic conclusions in the Generic
23 EIS, then the staff would perform a site-specific
24 analysis on that issue.

25 This slide shows important milestones for

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1 the environmental review process. The highlighted
2 dates indicate opportunities for public involvement in
3 the environmental review.

4 As each plant comes in for license renewal,
5 we publish a plant-specific supplement to the Generic
6 EIS. The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact
7 Statement for South Texas Project was published on
8 December 5, 2012, and also known as Supplement 48 of the
9 Generic EIS. And we are currently accepting public
10 comments on this document until February 22, 2013.

11 Today's meeting is being transcribed, and
12 comment provided here will be considered the same way as
13 written comment submitted to NRC. Once the comment
14 period closes, we will develop the final Supplemental
15 EIS, which we expect to publish in 2013, approximately
16 seven months from the draft.

17 Now I'm going to discuss in more detail
18 about the preliminary result of the review. For each
19 environmental issue identified, an impact level is
20 assigned.

21 For a small impact, the effect is not
22 detectable or too small to destabilize or noticeably
23 alter any important attribute of the environmental
24 resource being reviewed.

25 For a moderate impact, the effect is

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1 sufficient to alter noticeably but not destabilize
2 important attributes of the resource.

3 And finally, for impact to be considered
4 large, the effect must be clearly noticeable and
5 sufficient to destabilize important attributes of the
6 resource.

7 For example, the operation of South Texas
8 Project may cause the loss of adult and juvenile fish at
9 the intake structure. If the loss of fish is so small
10 that it does not appear to have noticeably altered
11 population of those species found in the lower Colorado
12 River, the impact will be small.

13 If losses cause some population to increase
14 or decrease and then stabilize at a different level, the
15 impact would be moderate.

16 If losses at the intake structure cause the
17 fish population to decline to the point where it cannot
18 be stabilized and continue to decline, then the impact
19 would be large.

20 For South Texas Project, the impact to the
21 fishery are small.

22 In conducting the review, an environmental
23 review team from NRC and Pacific Northwest Laboratory
24 analyzed [the] various impacts to the environment. This
25 review involves a wide range of expertise illustrated on

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1 this slide. The team examined environmental justice,
2 ecology, land use, regulatory compliance, climate
3 change, et cetera, for the supplement.

4 This slide lists the site-specific issues
5 that the NRC staff reviewed for the continuing operation
6 of South Texas Project during the proposed license
7 renewal period. Each issue is assigned a level of
8 environmental impact of small, moderate, or large by the
9 environmental reviewers.

10 In addition, there are two uncategorized
11 issues. Those are environmental justice and
12 electromagnetic field chronic effect. For
13 electromagnetic field chronic effects, the staff
14 considers the Generic EIS finding of uncertain impacts
15 is still appropriate. No further review was performed
16 on the chronic effects from exposure to electromagnetic
17 fields, because currently there's no scientific
18 consensus on this issue.

19 The staff's preliminary conclusion is that
20 the site-specific impacts related to license renewal for
21 South Texas Project are small, except for the impact of
22 electromagnetic field acute effects, or current-induced
23 electric shocks that are small to moderate.

24 For license renewal, South Texas Project
25 reported that their transmission lines from South Texas

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1 Project to the electric grid, which exceed the national
2 electrical safety code, South Texas Project Nuclear
3 Operating Company also listed potential mitigation
4 options to reduce or avoid impacts.

5 These options are reexamining the induced
6 current calculations for some transmission lines;
7 raising the transmission towers at potentially affected
8 road-transmission line intersections; modifying the
9 double-circuit lines to reduce the current-induced shock
10 potential, or placing caution signs under the
11 transmission lines.

12 The staff review concludes that impact of
13 electromagnetic field acute effects would be small to
14 moderate.

15 The staff also reviewed cumulative impact
16 associated with the continued operation of South Texas
17 Project. For cumulative impacts, the NRC staff looked
18 at the effects on the environment from past, present, and
19 reasonably foreseeable future human actions.

20 The impacts include both from the South
21 Texas Project operations and from other activities near
22 South Texas Project, such as the development of the
23 proposed White Stallion Energy Center, the Texas Prairie
24 Wetland Project, climate change, et cetera.

25 Past actions are those related to the

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1 environmental resources at the time of the power plant
2 licensing and construction. Present actions are those
3 related to the resources at the time of current
4 operations of the power plant. And future actions are
5 considered to be those that are reasonably foreseeable
6 through the end of the plant's operations, including the
7 period of extended operations.

8 In other words, the cumulative impact
9 analysis considers potential impacts through the end of
10 the current license term as well as the 20-year renewal
11 license term.

12 While the level of impacts due to the direct
13 and indirect effect associated with the continued
14 operation of South Texas Project are mostly small, the
15 staff preliminarily concluded that cumulative impacts
16 are small to moderate.

17 For the term beyond the 20-year period of
18 extended operations, the NRC addresses the management of
19 spent nuclear fuel in the waste confidence decision and
20 rule.

21 Previous license renewal Supplemental EIS
22 noted that the environmental impacts of temporary
23 storage of nuclear fuel for the period following the
24 reactor operating license term were addressed by this
25 rule.

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1 The Draft Supplemental EIS does not discuss
2 the potential environmental impacts of the storing spent
3 nuclear fuel for an extended period after the plant
4 ceases operations. That address will be addressed in
5 the NRC Waste Confidence Environmental Impact Statement
6 and Rule. That document is expected to be issued by
7 September 2014.

8 In August of 2012 the Commission decided
9 that the agency will not issue final licensing decisions
10 for reactors, including license renewal until the waste
11 confidence rule is completed. If at that time
12 site-specific issues related to the spent fuel storage
13 at South Texas Project remain unresolved, they will be
14 addressed separately.

15 The National Environmental Policy Act
16 mandates that each Environmental Impact Statement
17 consider alternatives to any proposed major federal
18 actions. A major step in determining whether a license
19 renewal is reasonable or not is comparing the likely
20 impacts of continued operation of nuclear power plants
21 with the likely impacts of alternatives of power
22 generation.

23 In the draft supplements, the NRC staff
24 initially considered 18 different alternatives to
25 license renewal at the South Texas Project. After this

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1 initial consideration, the staff then chose the five most
2 likely alternatives and analyzed these in depth.

3 Finally the NRC staff considered what would
4 happen if no action is taken and South Texas Project shut
5 down at the end of its current license without a specific
6 replacement alternative. This alternative would not
7 provide power generation capacity, nor would it meet the
8 needs currently met by South Texas Project.

9 The NRC preliminary conclusion is that
10 there is no clear environmentally preferred alternative
11 to license renewal. All alternatives capable of meeting
12 the needs currently served by South Texas Project entail
13 impacts greater than or equal to the proposed action of
14 license renewal.

15 This slide identifies me as your primary
16 point of contact with the NRC for the preparation of the
17 Environmental Impact Statement, and it also identifies
18 where documents related to our review may be found in the
19 local area.

20 The South Texas Project Draft Supplemental
21 Environmental Impact Statement is available at the Bay
22 City Library. All documents related to the reviews are
23 also available on the NRC website listed on this slide.

24 This slide provides the status of the safety
25 review. In December 2012 the applicant requested the

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1 safety review be suspended until January 1, 2014. As a
2 part of the license renewal process, the Advisory
3 Committee for Reactor Safeguards will provide
4 independent review for this review.

5 The members of the Advisory Committee for
6 Reactor Safeguards consists of nuclear experts from the
7 industry and academics.

8 NRC staff will address written comments in
9 the same way we address spoken comments received today.
10 You can submit written comments either online or via
11 conventional mail, meaning Postal Service.

12 To submit written comments online, visit
13 the website regulations.gov and search for docket ID
14 nrc-2010-0375. If you have written comments today, you
15 may give them to any NRC staff member today.

16 This concludes my presentation, and I'm
17 turning the meeting over to Susan.

18 MS. SALTER: Thank you, Tam.

19 So as I said, before we go into the public
20 comment period, let me just take a few minutes for any
21 questions or clarifications you may need -- questions
22 you have or clarifications you need on what Tam has
23 presented this afternoon.

24 So we're just going to have folks raise
25 their hand. If they have a question, we'll bring you the

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1 mic. Do we have any?

2 (No response.)

3 MS. SALTER: Okay. So what we're going to
4 do is we're going to move right into the comment period.
5 And, again, during this period NRC staff are in a
6 listening mode.

7 And we don't have very many speakers this
8 afternoon, but if you change your mind or if you decide
9 during the course of the comments that you now would like
10 to make a comment, you can always fill out a yellow card
11 and give it to myself or to Bob.

12 I'm going to call up our first speaker, is
13 Owen Bludau. And then we have Carolyn Thames and Terry
14 Farrar, in that order.

15 Please introduce yourself with your name
16 and any affiliation you have when you're at the
17 microphone.

18 MR. BLUDAU: Okay. I am Owen Bludau,
19 executive director of the Matagorda County Economic
20 Development Corporation.

21 The results that were presented are exactly
22 as I anticipated they could be, that there were small to
23 minimal impacts of any kind. I think the proof of the
24 pudding is that STP has been here for well over 20 years
25 now, and we have an environment that we appreciate and

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1 admire.

2 We went through a lot of internal furor two
3 years ago over a coal plant, and the people who opposed
4 that kept saying we have such a great environment here,
5 we don't want to destroy it. That means STP has not done
6 anything adverse to it, and I don't think renewal of this
7 permit is going to do anything that's going to change
8 that, so I firmly am in support of the findings of this
9 environmental impact study.

10 MS. SALTER: Thank you, Mr. Bludau.

11 Our next speaker is Carolyn Thames.

12 MS. THAMES: Good afternoon and welcome to
13 Bay City. My name is Carolyn Thames. I'm a business
14 consultant with Workforce Solutions, a local workforce
15 office here in Bay City, as well as a council member with
16 the City of Bay City.

17 I am here today to strongly support the
18 license renewal for STP Units 1 and 2 for an additional
19 20 years. STP is the largest employer in Matagorda
20 County, with approximately 1200 employees.

21 STP's license renewal will provide jobs for
22 our children and build a strong, stable economic base for
23 our community.

24 In my two terms on council, I've had the
25 opportunity to serve with several employees. These

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1 people donate their time, their talents to make a
2 difference in our community.

3 We trust the employees of STP; they're
4 experts at engineering, operations, maintenance, and the
5 environment. They are our neighbors, they are our
6 friends.

7 Thank you for being here. Thank you for
8 consideration of the license renewal.

9 MS. SALTER: Thank you, Ms. Thames.

10 And our next speaker is Terry Farrar.

11 MR. FARRAR: Thank you, Susan.

12 I am Terry Farrar. I own a business in
13 town, Farrar Financial Group. I serve on the Bay City
14 ISD school board, and I am also the chairman-elect for
15 the Bay City Chamber of Commerce.

16 I've been here for 28 years. The entire
17 time I've been here, STP has been, without a doubt, the
18 lifeblood of this community. I do not know anybody who
19 donates as much money to civic purposes, fund raisers.
20 They're very good about being a part of this community
21 with the Chamber.

22 Buddy Eller is the current chairman of the
23 Chamber of Commerce. He works at STP. Tim Powell, the
24 vice president at STP, is the president of the school
25 board here. Bart Brown is the department director of my

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1 Sunday School class there where I'm a Sunday School
2 teacher. Tim is a Sunday School teacher at First Baptist
3 Church.

4 The people at STP are not only -- do not only
5 just give the money that they give to make this community
6 viable, but they give their time. The leadership that
7 we experience because of the training that these people
8 have received at STP has made a difference in this
9 community. This community is what it is predominantly
10 because of STP and their influence in this community.

11 And I strongly support that we relicense
12 them and ask them to continue to participate and do what
13 they've done in this community for the last 25, 30 years.
14 Thanks.

15 MS. SALTER: Thank you, Mr. Farrar.

16 Those are all of the individuals who signed
17 up to speak.

18 I have your card, but it said the evening;
19 it didn't say -- but you are more than welcome to do both.
20 Would you like to do both?

21 Karen Hadden.

22 MS. HADDEN: Good afternoon. I'm Karen
23 Hadden, and I am the director of a statewide organization
24 called SEED Coalition, Sustainable Energy and Economic
25 Development Coalition.

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1 I'm going to speak in opposition to
2 relicensing Units 1 and 2. In fact, the option that I
3 think should be pursued is not actually on the list of
4 options.

5 I understand the importance of a major
6 industry in this community. I understand the importance
7 of jobs, and our organization does as well, and we support
8 that. We want every community in Texas to be
9 economically viable and thriving.

10 But what I think should be happening,
11 instead of relicensing two nuclear reactors that are set
12 to retire in 2027 and 2028, this is the time to plan for
13 a transition, to plan for worker training, to plan to move
14 toward cleaner, safer energy for the future.

15 And with 14 and 15 years to work with, that
16 is a doable goal. It's also very doable in today's world
17 to replace the energy with renewables combined with
18 energy efficiency, and that can be backed up with natural
19 gas. This is affordable; this is real. Other
20 communities are looking at these options. It can be
21 done; it is being done.

22 For an example, right now wind turbines are
23 booming across Texas. We've already had a point in time
24 where wind was producing 25 percent and more of the power
25 that was up on the ERCOT grid. Nuclear reactors at the

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1 time were around 11 percent.

2 We can do this; we are doing this. Granted,
3 the wind comes in and out. That's why you combine with
4 energy storage, that's why you do backup. And ERCOT is
5 becoming very expert in making these things level out.

6 What could this do for the community?
7 There could still be jobs, and lots of them, and hopefully
8 even more. This could be growth for the community. So
9 I think the thing to do is to plan.

10 Nuclear reactors were used in this country
11 as a bridge between the time when we could get to the point
12 where renewables were viable. That day is here; that
13 time is now.

14 I'm personally using this in my own home.
15 I have solar panels on the roof that do more than I ever
16 thought they would. There are days when I can run the
17 whole house and charge an electric car, which does most
18 of my daily driving. That's possible, that's doable.
19 We're doing it. It's here today.

20 There are many ways to move forward. The
21 risks of continuing with nuclear power are great, and
22 that's because of the inherent nature of nuclear power.
23 There are accidents; there are fires. We've just been
24 through that.

25 There's an increasing amount of fracking,

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1 and fracking has been linked to earthquakes, and who
2 knows what will be happening over time. I think the
3 environmental impact research needs to look further at
4 that question.

5 In the case of Fukushima, reactor number 1
6 had been set to retire one month before the accident
7 there, which, you know, involved their diesel
8 generators, to large extent, as well as tsunami and
9 earthquake.

10 So if that plant had been shut down as it
11 should have been -- they were given 10 more years, not
12 20, like we're looking at in this case -- then that would
13 be one less reactor that had a meltdown. And the whole
14 world is feeling the impacts of that disaster in many
15 different ways, including radiation that travels around
16 the globe and impacts fisheries, it impacts products and
17 workers' lives and people who live in Japan, as well as
18 in the US it's been measured. This radiation does reach
19 the US.

20 I'm concerned about at the plant -- and I
21 think there needs to be further look at tritium. There
22 are tritium problems at the site. There's monitoring
23 wells that show that.

24 When you combine that with the fact that the
25 bottom of the main cooling reservoir has some leakage

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1 going on -- this is documented; this was in the
2 application for South Texas Project 3 and 4 -- okay,
3 where is the research? Where is that tritium going? Is
4 it going out the bottom of the cooling reservoir and going
5 into the Gulf of Mexico?

6 Is it going into fish? Is it going into the
7 food chain? Is it impacting animals that feed upon these
8 species? Could it be a factor impacting whooping
9 cranes, which are endangered?

10 Nobody has looked at this, and it needs to
11 be looked at. This is part of the environmental impact
12 assessment. You've already got the factor that the huge
13 amount of water being used to cool these reactors means
14 less fresh water can reach the Gulf of Mexico; less blue
15 crabs. That impacts birds.

16 But in addition to that, we need to be
17 looking at, at this point in time, whether the radiation
18 is getting into these species; not just the numbers of
19 fish. There needs to be additional analysis.

20 There have been problems with this reactor
21 over the years, and they seem to be increasing. While
22 we read about great safety reports and great numbers of
23 days without shutting down, well, that's good, and great
24 worker safety; that's what the reports say.

25 But when you look across the

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1 country -- there's an expert by the name of David
2 Lochbaum; he has worked for the NRC; he's also worked for
3 the Union of Concerned Scientists, and he did a report
4 called The Nuclear Tightrope.

5 And he looked at plants where they had
6 year-long outages. What he found was a typical pattern,
7 that in a reactor that had a serious accident, serious
8 problem, there would be glowing reports, right up until
9 the accident happened. Nothing was wrong, everything
10 was perfect, and then all of a sudden, catastrophic
11 problem that had been missed all along that just wasn't
12 showing up. And then we had this major problem.

13 So this has happened over and over, and I
14 think it's time for this report and for the NRC in general
15 to look deeply into what's going on.

16 Now, in 2003 there was leakage of
17 radioactive material outside the reactor, at the base of
18 it. That's not where radioactive material's supposed to
19 be, ever.

20 And I remember when these reactors got
21 built. We were told there was a backup system and then
22 another backup system and then another. In fact, there
23 were 12 -- there used to be 12 backup systems, and
24 radioactivity would never escape, and yet it did. It
25 has, within this operating lifetime.

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1 We still have quite a ways to go before the
2 retirement dates of these reactors, and we've got these
3 problems.

4 Recently there have been problems with the
5 control rods getting stuck, not being able to function
6 properly. We had an outage just last week that involved
7 that, control rods dropping when they're not supposed to.

8 That is unsafe. That means that we don't
9 have full control of this reactor. I'm concerned. I
10 personally live in Austin, Texas, and Austin is an owner
11 of this reactor. I'm happy that we get some power from
12 it, but I'm very concerned about this safety aspect, for
13 the people who live here, for people downwind and around
14 the state.

15 Metal fatigue increases as reactors age.
16 The most dangerous years are the early startup years and
17 the final years of a reactor. So to consider giving a
18 nuclear reactor 20 more years of time to operate 14 and
19 15 years ahead of time, to me this is like telling
20 somebody you're going to sell them a used car, but you're
21 going to sell it to them today, and they're going to
22 receive it 14 and 15 years later. That doesn't make
23 sense.

24 This decision is being looked at and this
25 meeting is being held way, way too early. This is wrong

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1 timing, and it needs to hold, it needs to wait.

2 Short of declaring that it's time to look
3 at transition away, I would urge you to do no action for
4 now and to delay until we know more. With the current
5 problems with the reactor, with the current fire, that
6 needs to be fully investigated.

7 And it's good that it appears that no
8 radioactivity got released, but what if this fire was
9 bigger? What if it was elsewhere? What if
10 circumstances had somehow been different?

11 It concerns me that reactors are operating
12 in a community that, after all of these years, still has
13 no paid professional fire department. I'm sure the
14 volunteers are very good people and probably trained, but
15 if you've got nuclear reactor in your backyard, that
16 means that there should be a paid professional fire
17 department that can be called on.

18 Furthermore, I think everyone should be
19 asking the question, if this was a very large fire,
20 extensive, how long would it take to get backup fire
21 departments here; for example, from Houston? -- because
22 I have a feeling that it's longer than just the drive to
23 get here.

24 These are serious safety concerns.

25 There are questions about the impacts of

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1 when the reactor is down. It becomes expensive. With
2 the 16 percent ownership of Austin Energy, the months
3 that they were down, roughly from November till almost
4 April of 2012 -- November 2011 to almost April, that cost
5 Austin 42 million, and so I think it's increasingly
6 expensive as we have these outages. These reactors have
7 been part of the year-long outages in years past.

8 Preliminary findings of small to moderate
9 in terms of cumulative impacts, that should be none.
10 There's a serious problem here. If this community was
11 hosting wind energy or solar, I don't think you would be
12 having these same impacts.

13 Moderate is not acceptable. And it matters
14 to whom? Who is it moderate for? To whom is it low?
15 The workers on site? I'm concerned about the fact that
16 as contract employees get laid off, as some of the
17 existing workers are impacted in the world of job cuts,
18 that safety is taking a backseat to economics and trying
19 to shave costs.

20 That means workers on the site have to work
21 longer hours, have to work more, and potentially are
22 exposed to more radioactivity. That is of great
23 concern, and these things need to be addressed in the
24 Environmental Impact Statement.

25 And so for a worker, that impact might not

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1 be moderate; that impact might be huge. It depends on
2 who we're talking about.

3 I think I'll wrap up my remarks at this point
4 in time, and I thank you for this opportunity.

5 MS. SALTER: Thank you, Ms. Hadden.

6 So that was all of the folks that signed up
7 to make a comment. I'll give one last chance.

8 (No response.)

9 MS. SALTER: All right. Well, thank you
10 again for coming out this afternoon. We will be having
11 another meeting this evening at 7:00. You're welcome to
12 join us again for that. It will be the same meeting as
13 this was but with probably different folks making
14 comments.

15 I also want to let you know that we had
16 feedback forms at the front table when you came in, and
17 the NRC is always looking to improve their public meeting
18 format and process, so please take some time to fill those
19 out on your way out. You can leave them here or drop them
20 in the mail to the NRC.

21 So with that, I'd like to turn the meeting
22 over to Dave Wrona, Branch Chief in the Division of
23 License Renewal in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor
24 Regulation, for some closing remarks.

25 MR. WRONA: Thank you, Susan.

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1 Tam, would you mind going back to the slide
2 that shows the various ways that folks can comment on our
3 Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

4 First of all, I want to thank you all for
5 coming out tonight -- this afternoon and taking some time
6 out of your schedule to actually contribute to the
7 process to help us make our Final Environmental Impact
8 Statement the best that it can be.

9 I want to let everybody know it doesn't
10 matter whether you commented today, you comment in the
11 evening, you write us a letter, you go on the internet.
12 All the comments are treated the same.

13 The NRC will consider all these comments,
14 go through them as we develop our final impact -- Final
15 Environmental Impact Statement.

16 If you get your comments in by February 22,
17 we can guarantee that they will be considered. We will
18 include them all in the final report, and responses to
19 all those comments.

20 Again, I just want to thank everybody for
21 the time and coming out and helping us with our
22 environmental review process.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. SALTER: Be back at seven o'clock; open
25 house at 6:00 if you'd like to join us again this evening.

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1 (Whereupon, at 2:47 p.m., the hearing was
2 concluded.)
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