

**Craver, Patti**

**From:** Krieg, Rebekah <rebekah.krieg@pnnl.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 10, 2011 11:10 AM  
**To:** Doyle, Daniel  
**Cc:** Logan, Dennis; Mcdowell, Bruce K  
**Subject:** RE: Columbia aquatic letters for concurrence  
**Attachments:** CGS DSEIS ltr to FWS\_rhk.docx; CGS DSEIS ltr to NMFS\_rhk.docx

Dan,  
 The FWS letter is fine – I only had once change (“no affect” rather than “no effect”, see attached letter). I did not see mention of any of the terrestrial species, but I am assuming that was dealt with by another communication so that he knows that NRC had determined that none of the terrestrial species mentioned in his letter were in the vicinity.

I did provide more extensive suggestions for the NMFS letter (also attached). I know that past letters from NRC have said that the NRC staff identified the EFH species, and there may be a reason for this that I do not understand, however, we actually got the list of species from NMFS in their June 23, 2010 letter. I thought it would be appropriate to state that. I am, however, checking with one of our aquatic resource coordinators (Ann Miracle) to see if her experience is different. Also, I was under the impression that the May 3, 2010 letter you sent was the initiation of the consultation, and Ann concurred that was her understanding of how the process worked also.

This review triggered a finding of an error in the BA/EFH. This error is not included in the EIS. The error is in Table 3-2, where we had included steelhead (*O. mykiss*) instead of the appropriate coho (*O. kisutch*). The remainder of the discussion and analysis in the BA/EFH is correct, it is just in the table that the error occurs. My apologies for not catching this earlier.

**Table 3-2.** Aquatic Fish Species with Essential Fish Habitat in the Vicinity of the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River in the Vicinity of the Columbia Generating Station

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Upper Columbia River Chinook salmon
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	coho salmon

Sources: NMFS 2010a

Becky

**From:** Doyle, Daniel [<mailto:Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 09, 2011 12:11 PM  
**To:** Krieg, Rebekah  
**Cc:** Logan, Dennis; Mcdowell, Bruce K  
**Subject:** Columbia aquatic letters for concurrence

Becky,

In preparation for issuing the Columbia draft SEIS, I prepared the attached letters to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NMFS.

B/19

Please review them and let me know if you have any revisions or comments.

Thanks,

Dan Doyle

Project Manager  
Division of License Renewal  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
[daniel.doyle@nrc.gov](mailto:daniel.doyle@nrc.gov)  
(301) 415-3748

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

SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF  
COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION

Dear Ms. Thorson:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has completed the enclosed draft Supplement XX 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 (BA) for license renewal of CGS is included in Appendix D-1 of the enclosed draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

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 it to, the Columbia River for six mechanical draft cooling towers. The plant is operated by Energy Northwest.

In a letter dated March 22, 2010, the NRC requested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) provide lists of Federally-listed endangered or threatened species and information on 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. The FWS responded in an e-mail dated November 8, 2010, 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.

This BA 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. The NRC concludes that continued operation of CGS will have no affect on the bull trout.

R. Thorson

- 2 -

We are requesting your concurrence with our determination. In reaching our conclusion, the NRC staff relied on information provided by the applicant and on research performed by NRC staff. Please note that the comment period ends on MONTH DAY, 2011. If you have any questions regarding this issue or the staff=s request, please contact Daniel Doyle at 301-415-3748 or by e-mail at [Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

Bo M. Pham, Chief  
Projects Branch 1  
Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-397

Enclosure:  
As stated

cc w/encl: Listserv

We are requesting your concurrence with our determination. In reaching our conclusion, the NRC staff relied on information provided by the applicant and on research performed by NRC staff. Please note that the comment period ends on MONTH DAY, 2011. If you have any questions regarding this issue or the staff=s request, please contact Daniel Doyle at 301-415-3748 or by e-mail at [Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

Bo M. Pham, Chief  
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Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Mr. Richard Domingue  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Hydropower Division  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd, Ste 1100  
Portland, OR 97232-2182

SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENT  
FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION  
(TAC NO. ME3121)

Dear Mr. Domingue:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has completed the enclosed draft Supplement XX to NUREG-1437, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants," to evaluate the proposed renewal of 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 (BA) for license renewal of CGS is included in Appendix D-1 of the enclosed draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). Also, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the NRC is requesting initiation of an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation regarding this proposed action of license renewal. The NRC's EFH assessment for CGS license renewal is also in Appendix D-1 of the enclosed draft SEIS.

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 it to, the Columbia River for six mechanical draft cooling towers.

In a letter, dated May 3, 2010, the NRC staff requested that NMFS provide information on Federally listed endangered or threatened species, proposed or candidate species, designated critical habitats and essential fish habitat (EFH) in the vicinity of the project site. NMFS responded to the NRC's request in a letter dated June 23, 2010 (NMFS 2010a) and identified two Federally listed species near the CGS site. The two species are the Upper Columbia River spring Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and the Upper Columbia River steelhead (*O. mykiss*). Critical habitat for both species occurs within the action area.

In the same letter, NMFS also indicated that the Columbia River in the CGS plant vicinity provides EFH features for both the Upper Columbia River Chinook and the coho salmon (*O. kisutch*) (currently an unlisted reintroduction effort). The EFH for the Upper Columbia River Chinook includes all three runs (spring, summer, and fall).

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~~The NRC staff identified a total of three aquatic Federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species of concern having the potential to be present in the vicinity of CGS and its associated transmission line right-of-way. The NRC staff developed a joint BA/EFH. The evaluation in the BA concludes that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the two Federally listed species, and will have no affect on the third species.~~

**Comment [RHK1]:** I think the confusion on the third species (no affect) is that the third species is the bull trout that is under the FWS not NMFS.

~~As described in the EFH assessment, the NRC staff identified two species that have EFH designated in the vicinity of CGS. The evaluation in the EFH assessment concludes that CGS will have a minimal adverse effect on EFH for both the Upper Columbia River Chinook salmon and the coho salmon species. The NRC staff concludes that continued operation of CGS (license renewal of CGS for an additional 20 years of operation) would result in will have a minimal adverse effects on Federally managed species and their EFH for both the Upper Columbia River Chinook salmon and the coho salmon. in the Columbia River near and downstream of the CGS site.~~

~~We are requesting your concurrence with our determination in the BA portion of the joint BA/EFH and conclusion of the Section 7 consultation. We also request your concurrence with our determination in the EFH portion of the joint BA/EFH and conclusion of the consultation under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. We are also requesting initiation of an EFH consultation.~~

R. Domingue

- 2 -

In reaching these conclusions, the NRC staff relied on information provided by the applicant, on research performed by NRC staff, and on information from National Marine Fisheries Service. Please note that the comment period closes MONTH DAY, 2011. If you have any questions regarding the enclosed draft supplemental environmental impact statement, the EFH assessment, or the staff's request, please contact Mr. Daniel Doyle, Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-3748 or by e-mail at [Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

Bo M. Pham, Chief  
Projects Branch 1  
Division of License Renewal

Docket No. 50-397

Enclosure:  
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cc w/encl: Listserv

R. Domingue

- 2 -

In reaching these conclusions, the NRC staff relied on information provided by the applicant, on research performed by NRC staff, and on information from National Marine Fisheries Service. If you have any questions regarding the enclosed draft supplemental environmental impact statement, the EFH assessment, or the staff's request, please contact Mr. Daniel Doyle, Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-3748 or by e-mail at [Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

Bo M. Pham, Chief  
Projects Branch 1  
Division of License Renewal

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Letter to Richard Domingue from Bo M. Pham, dated MONTH DAY, 2011

**SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENT  
FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION  
(TAC NO. ME3121)**

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