NRR-PMDAPEm Resource

From: Banic, Merrilee

Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2013 1:47 PM

To: Nieh, Ho; Thadani, Mohan; Beall, Robert; Lupold, Timothy; Casto, Greg; Kavanagh, Kerri;

McCarver, Sammy; Hamzehee, Hossein; Gilman, Joseph; Lockhart, Denise; Yoder, Matthew;

Simmons, Anneliese; Sanders, Serita; Jones, Steve

Subject: Attached pleas find the transcript for PRB telecon with petitioner Lochbaum

Attachments: PRB Meeting Transcript.doc

I will be sending out a scheduler for a PRB meeting in January to discuss acceptance of the petition.

Hearing Identifier: NRR_PMDA

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Subject: Attached pleas find the transcript for PRB telecon with petitioner Lochbaum

Sent Date: 12/12/2013 1:46:35 PM **Received Date:** 12/12/2013 1:46:52 PM

From: Banic, Merrilee

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Tracking Status:: Response: None: 10/30/2013 12:23:00 PM

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Tracking Status:: Response: None: 10/31/2013 7:12:00 AM

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Official Transcript of Proceedings NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Title: 10 CFR 2.206 Petition Review Board RE

Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plant

Docket Number: 50-333

Location: Teleconference

Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2013

Work Order No.: NRC-396 Pages 1-24

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1	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2	NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
3	+ + + +
4	10 CFR 2.206 PETITION REVIEW BOARD (PRB)
5	CONFERENCE CALL
6	RE
7	FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT
8	+ + + +
9	WEDNESDAY
10	NOVEMBER 13, 2013
11	+ + + +
12	The conference call was held, Ho K. Nieh,
13	Jr., Chairperson of the Petition Review Board,
14	presiding.
15	
16	PETITIONER: DAVID LOCHBAUM
17	
18	PETITION REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS
19	HO K. NIEH, JR., Director, Division of Regional
20	Support
21	MOHAN THADANI, Petition Manager for 2.206 petition
22	JOSEPH GILLMAN, Office of
23	General Counsel
24	
25	

1	NRC HEADQUARTERS STAFF
2	ROBERT BEALL, Branch Chief, DORL, NRR
3	MERRILEE J. BANIC, Petition Coordinator, NRR
4	CARRIE KAVANAGH, NRO
5	MATTHEW YODER, Chemical Engineering Branch, Division
6	of Engineering, NRR
7	
8	NRC REGION I OFFICE
9	STEVE SHAFFER
10	
11	ALSO PRESENT
12	CHRIS ADNER, Licensing Manager, FitzPatrick Nuclear
13	Power Plant
14	JESSICA AZULAY, Alliance for a Green Economy
15	TIM JUDSON, Citizens Awareness Network
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1:32 p.m.

THADANI: I would like to thank MR. everybody for attending this meeting. My name is Thadani, and I'm the NRC's Senior Project Mohan Manager assigned to FitzPatrick Plant. We are here today to allow Petitioner, Mr. David Lochbaum, address the Petition Review Board regarding a 10 CFR 2.206 petition dated July 25, 2013, filed by him on behalf of Alliance for a Green Economy, Nuclear, Citizens Awareness, of and the Union Concerned Scientists. I'm the petition manager for this petition; the Petition Review Board chairman is Mr. Ho Nieh, Director, Division of Inspections and Office Regional Support, of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Eastern time; the meeting is being recorded by the NRC Operations Center, and will be transcribed by a court reporter. The transcript will become a supplement to the petition; the transcript will also be made publicly available and will be the PRB's meeting summary. I'd like to open this meeting with introductions. In our room here today, I will go on my left.

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1	MR. BEALL: This is Robert Beall, Acting
2	Branch Chief, DORL, NRR.
3	MS. KAVANAGH: Kerri Kavanagh, I'm the
4	Chief of the Quality Assurance Vendor Inspection
5	Branch, Office of New Reactors.
6	MR. YODER: Matt Yoder, NRR Division of
7	Engineering, Chemical Engineering Branch.
8	CHAIRMAN NIEH: Ho Nieh, Director,
9	Division of Inspection and Regional Support.
10	MS. BANIC: Lee Banic, Position
11	Coordinator, NRR.
12	MR. GILLMAN: Joe Gillman, Office of the
13	General Counsel.
14	MR. THADANI: We have completed
15	introductions at NRC Headquarters, and I would now
16	request those who are on the phones, please identify
17	yourself.
18	MR. LOCHBAUM: This is David Lochbaum,
19	Director of the Nuclear Safety Project for the Union
20	of Concerned Scientists.
21	MR. ADNER: This is also Chris Adner, the
22	Licensing Manager at the FitzPatrick Nuclear Power
23	Plant.
24	MR. KORS: This is Ken Kors, Licensing,
25	FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant.

MS. AZULAY: This is Jessica Azulay, Staff Organizer with Alliance for a Green Economy.

MR. THADANI: Is that everybody? to emphasize that we each need to speak clearly and is loudly to make sure that the conversation accurately recorded and subsequently correctly transcribed. If you do have something that you would like to say, please first state your name for the For those dialing in the meeting, please record. remember to mute your phone to minimize the background If you do not have mute button, and distractions. this can be done by pressing star 6; to unmute, press At this time, I'll turn the meeting star 6 again. over PRB Chairman, Mr. Ho Nieh.

Thank you, Mohan. CHAIRMAN NIEH: the Chair of the Petition Review Board. Ho Nieh, Hello, Dave and Jessica; thank you for taking the time today to discuss your petition with the PRB, and also good afternoon to I think Chris and Ken from the FitzPatrick Station. Today, we're going to discuss the 2.206 petition that was submitted by Mr. Dave Lochbaum on behalf of the Alliance for a Green Economy, Beyond Nuclear, Citizens Awareness Network, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. Before we get into the details of the petition, I would like to

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provide a brief overview of, and some background on the 2.206 petition process, which is in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

This process is a public process in which any member of the public can petition the NRC to take an enforcement type action related to an NRC licensee or a licensed activities. Depending on the results of the NRC's evaluation of these petitions, and consistent with the NRC's safety mission, the NRC could modify, suspend or revoke an NRC-issued license or take any other appropriate enforcement action to resolve a safety issue at an NRC-licensed facility. The NRC conducts its review of 2.206 petitions in accordance with the quidance in Management Directive 8.11, and that is a publicly available document if you would like to take a look at that.

The purpose of today's teleconference is to allow the petitioners an opportunity to provide any additional explanation or support for the petition that they have submitted so the PRB can consider that in its evaluation. I do want to note that this meeting, it's is not hearing nor is it an opportunity for the petitioners to question or examine the PRB on the merits of the issues in the request, and the Petition Review Board, or PRB, will not be making a

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decision on the merits of the petition at this meeting.

meeting, Following this the Review Board will conduct an internal deliberation on whether the petition meets the criteria for review, and again, those criteria are presented in Management And once that decision is made, the Directive 8.11. NRC will inform the petitioner of the decision. Α typical Petition Review Board at the NRC consists of a chairman usually, and a senior executive service It also has a petition manager and a Petition Review Board coordinator, and the NRC also brings in other members of the NRC staff to support the review, and that's based on the specific content of the petition that was submitted.

As described in our process, the NRC staff during this call may ask clarifying questions in order to better understand the petition and the information presented to the NRC staff today, and again, that's done with the goal of reaching a decision on whether to accept or reject the petitioner's request for review under the 10 CFR 2.206 petition process. I'll give you just a brief summary of the petition. In the petition request dated July 23, 2013, Mr. Lochbaum requested that the NRC take enforcement action by

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imposing an Order of regulatory requirement that the condenser tubes at the FitzPatrick Plant be replaced prior to the reactor restarting after the Fall 2014 refueling outage.

Before I turn the meeting over to Mr. Lochbaum, I would like to remind those on the phone again to please mute your phones to minimize any background noise. In addition, since the call is being recorded and transcribed, if you are speaking, please identify yourself so the court reporter can properly document your statement. So at this time, I'd like to turn the meeting over to Dave Lochbaum. Dave, you have the floor.

MR. LOCHBAUM: Thank you. This is Dave Lochbaum. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the Petition Review Board, albeit remotely, at my convenience. I think the petition is fairly clear, and I really requested this opportunity to, as Ho pointed out, answer any clarifying questions if there are any about what we're seeking in the petition or why we're seeking it. So it's really an opportunity to provide any clarification if it's requested by the NRC staff.

I did want to take a moment to highlight a couple of portions in the petition; they both appear

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on page 5 of the petition. Towards the top of that page, we extracted a quote from an NRC inspection report dated April 23, 2013, where the NRC inspection report mentions Entergy's plans to replace condenser tubes during the Fall 2014 refueling outage. we think--we cited that because that company's plans; it seems to be reasonable, or the request that we're asking is not unreasonable because the company's already announced its plans to do that. All we're trying to do is to kind of highlight it by the next paragraph, where we talk about the NRC issuing a confirmatory order on July 1, 2013 to the Accone Occonee licensee, basically requiring some previously committed to items be completed by certain date, a specified date, which basically turned a commitment or a promise into a more enforceable regulatory requirement.

That same kind of regulatory footprint or regulatory leverage is what we're seeking with the company's plans to replace the condenser tubes at FitzPatrick; basically to have the NRC issue some kind of regulatory requirement, order, amendment to the license or whatever it takes to basically do the same thing that was done at Accone Occonee--transform a promise or a commitment into a more legally-

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1	enforceable requirement that ensures that it happens.
2	That would not preclude the licensee from
3	changing that date and going past the Fall of 2014,
4	but it would entail prior NRC review and approval for
5	that to happen, whereas a commitment could be revised
6	and extended much more readily. So that's what we're
7	seeking in the petition is to basically make that
8	current plan more of a legally-enforceable
9	requirement. With that, I'd be glad to entertain any
10	questions, clarifying questions about the petition or
11	anything in the petition, if there are any.
12	CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay, thank you, Dave.
13	I'llmaybe I'll offer the opportunity for anybody
14	from the NRC staff here that has any questions? No
15	questions? Mohan, please.
16	MR. THADANI: Yes, we have w we don't have
17	anything specific to ask now, but we do reserve the
18	right to ask in the future, when we do some further
19	studies reviews.
20	MR. LOCHBAUM: Okay, fair enough, but I'd
21	be glad to provide any information at any time now or
22	down the road, so just let me know if I can help in
23	any way.

I did have a question, but I believe Jessica, if you

CHAIRMAIN NIEH: No I'm sorry, this is Ho.

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have something to add, please do.

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MS. AZULAY: Yes, this is Jessica. I believe my colleague, Tim Judson from CAN is on the phone, and I wanted to give him an opportunity to speak first.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay. Tim, are you on the line there?

MR. JUDSON: I am, I am. Sorry I called in a few minutes late. And thanks to Jessica for giving me the time and thanks to the Petition Review Board for letting us comment today. So I just wanted be able to put the issue of the FitzPatrick condenser into a larger context, which we're very concerned about, you know, the trajectory that this reactor is headed down. We are--a number of the petitioners in this proceeding are also involved in a separate 2.206 proceeding regarding the financial qualifications of Entergy to continue operating FitzPatrick, and this particular issue of the unplanned power changes and the role of the condenser in that has been a central issue of evidence in that petition regarding Entergy's financial condition and their desire--their cutting costs on safety-related maintenance issues at the plant.

And we really think that this is an

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important issue for NRC to deal with as an individual item as a way to mitigate the broader safety concerns that may arise in the financial environment that operators like Entergy, and particularly FitzPatrick, are operating in. As an example of that, one of the concerns that's come up most recently with respect to these issues has been a concern about how NRC is evaluating cost-benefit analyses regarding the sort of--in relation to the financial condition that operators are--that licensees find themselves in.

In particular, there was a report by UBS Investment Research in February of this year, having met with NRC regarding the concern of particularly reactors in the markets that thev're Entergy's operating in. And they made a very concerning comment about how NRC made the decision not to require filters on hardened vents for Mark I BWRs, and in particular they mentioned that there was a concern by NRC about the impact of requiring safety upgrades in the condition that financial they're operating their reactors in. More particularly, I mean clearly that the requiring--that issuing safety requirements may cause certain reactors to go out of business, or at least be an additional burden on their continued operations.

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We would be very concerned about NRC deferring action on an item like the condenser, both because it clearly has resulted in a safety impact vis a vis the white rating under the unplanned power changes indicator, and this is precisely the sort of thing that NRC needs to be able to take action on in order to protect safety standards within the economic context like those licensees like Entergy are finding themselves in. One additional concern with respect to how this is playing out at FitzPatrick, what is Entergy's diffidencedefiance about its plans regarding the continued operation of FitzPatrick.

You know, we know that the plan as Entergy has suggested it has been to replace the condenser tubes at FitzPatrick at an extra fueling outage, which would occur next October, but it's also increasingly— -because Entergy has indicated increasing uncertainty as whether they will actually conduct to refueling outage, or take FitzPatrick into a shut down And, in particular, at a state Senate condition. hearing in early October, an Entergy representative said that the continued operation of FitzPatrick past the Fall of 2014 refueling is an item that they "have to review on a routine basis at this point."

And we realize that the issue of the

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condenser is very much hung up in this, because Entergy is going to need to plan for the capital investment and order the equipment necessary to conduct such a replacement at that time, and the fact that the reactor is continuing to have unplanned power changes as a result of the condenser and presenting an ongoing safety concern in the meantime very much underlines the need for NRC to act on this issue. So with that, I'll close my comments and cede the floor to Jessica. Thanks.

MS. AZULAY: Thank you, Tim. So again, my is Jessica Azulay, I'm a staff organizer for Alliance for a Green Economy; I'm calling in from Syracuse, New York today. And I just wanted to let you all know a little bit about Alliance for a Green We're a coalition of environmental and social justice organizations based in New York State, and our member organizations are the Atlantic Chapter the Sierra Club, Peace Action New York State, Center for Health, Environment and Justice, Citizens Environmental Coalition, Central New York Citizens Awareness Network, Peace Action of Central New York and the Syracuse Peace Council. So as you can see, together our member groups represent tens of thousands of New Yorkers concerned about nuclear safety, and

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many live in the region surrounding the FitzPatrick reactor.

For more than a year, we've been concerned about the increasing number of unplanned power changes at FitzPatrick. In the fourth quarter of last year, the plant exceeded the green-white threshold for unplanned power changes; but even before that, it was already seeing an above-average number of these destabilizing events. And since crossing the threshold, FitzPatrick has stayed in the white for unplanned power changes for four quarters now. WE know that not all of these unplanned power changes stem from the condenser issues, but the majority of We know this from reading the quarterly them do. inspection reports and the licensee notes on Safety Performance Summary.

So we joined this petition in order to insure that the NRC will address the underlying cause of the ongoing unplanned power changes at FitzPatrick, and will enforce its quality assurance regulation on the plant by requiring Entergy to replace the tubes in the condenser. These unplanned power changes are destabilizing and they increase the safety risks of running the reactor. Entergy's failure to replace the condenser so far obviously at the end of its reliable

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life, and which has caused such an elevated number of unplanned power changes for more than a year now is a threat to our safety. So we're asking NRC to require a true fix to these issues with a clear deadline.

For the financial reasons that Tim Judson just laid out, we don't believe Entergy can be relied upon to act decisively in the public interest in this honor the time line it previously to discussed with the NRC. Even though that inspection report that Dave Lochbaum just pointed out, where Entergy stated its plans to replace the tubes in the condenser during next year's refueling outage, we don't believe that Entergy considers this a solid In an interview with the Syracuse Post commitment. Standard about six weeks ago, Bill Mohl, President of Entergy Wholesale Commodities, was reported as saying that Entergy is considering replacing the condenser tubes during the next refueling outage, but he said that no final decision has been made.

So it's increasingly unclear, given Entergy's financial situation at FitzPatrick, whether the company will refuel the reactor in 2014 or will close it, and even if Entergy does refuel the reactor in 2014, the plant will still be under economic pressure and at risk of imminent retirement, unless

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something dramatic shifts in the New York electricity market. With the future of the plant in limbo, and free cash flow in the negative, it is all the more important that NRC hold Entergy accountable for investing in this vital equipment we all rely on for our protection from a nuclear accident. Without this requirement that we're asking for, it would be all too easy for Entergy to put financial interests above safety, to absorb the hassle of unplanned power changes and increased inspections, while putting off this expensive investment as long as possible.

If Entergy does refuel the reactor next year, they cannot be allowed to waffle on replacing the condenser, no matter how expensive or hard it will be for their bottom line. So we're asking that this Petition Review Board consider this petition very seriously and issue the requirement that we're asking for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay thank you, Jessica, Tim and Dave. Well in my job as the Petition Review Board Chair--this is Ho Nieh, NRR speaking--you know, we'll insure that the NRC staff thoroughly considers the information submitted in the petition, as well as the information you all presented on the phone today. I do want to point out that--Tim, you mentioned this

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as well, and Jessica, you touched on this also in your remarks with respect to the financial issues raised in a separate petition; that is also in the NRC's process here, and there's been a separate board convened to evaluate the information in that petition. So that will be something that we'll remain aware of with what that petition review board respect to evaluating, but it will likely not be something that we'll consider as part of this petition. But unless there's a reason to join those two together, you know, we'll have to think about that at some point in time in the future. But I do want to separate those two issues, because there are two separate petitions.

I did have one question, and Tim and Jessica, your remarks touched on this with respect to the unplanned power changes and the risk to public health and safety, but I would ask also Dave, I was reading the petition before the meeting, and I understand that you're seeking an enforcement action, similar to what we did with OconeOconee and the modifications they were making to that facility, which basically puts in place a legally-binding requirement to complete the modifications by a certain date in time. And in the petition, it's quoted "While perhaps not posing the same heightened risk to the public as

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the safety shortcomings at Occonee, the condenser tube degradation at FitzPatrick poses risk to the public."

That was the part I was quoting from the petition.

So Dave, let me ask I guess, are there any other issues that you'd like to make the Board aware of with respect to safety risks to the public beyond what was described by Tim and Jessica with the unplanned power changes and the white performance indicator?

MR. LOCHBAUM: This is Dave Lochbaum. No, I think to elaborate what was in the petition, the quote you just read from the petition, you know the NRC's ROP used to have the unplanned scrams with complications, where loss of the normal heat synch sink or the condenser was an initiator, and that was in recognition that while not technically safety grade or relied upon in a safety analysis, if you lose the condenser or the normal heat synchink, you're making your life more difficult; you're increasing the risk.

And basically, that's what I was alluding petition, is the that here there's an well-established identified, problem with the condenser which makes its reliability less than it was if they replaced the steam generator codenser tubes. It doesn't--it's not that you're one step away from

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meltdown, but you are reducing the reliability of the plant the way it's operating. So that's the safety implications to the public I was inferring from that statement.

Okay, thank you very much, CHAIRMAN NIEH: Dave, I appreciate that clarification, and you know when you mentioned that -- this is Ho again from NRR--I kind of reflect to my days back as an inspector; in Ι a site not too far was at away FitzPatrick, at Genay Ginna, but I do remember that performance indicator scram with lots of normal heat And now finding myself back in this position 13 years later, things have changed in the performance indicators, and yes you were correct that that indicator is no longer part of the PIs that are voluntarily reported by industry. But Dave, thanks for that clarification and elaboration on that point in your petition. Any other questions from the group here? Okay I think Jessica, did you--were you going to make another comment?

MS. AZULAY: Yes, this is Jessica Azulay.

I just wanted to respond to the question of the financial qualifications petition and its relationship to this petition. I wanted to clarify that we're not suggesting that these petitions be joined. We do

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realize that they are separate petitions, and that our financial qualifications petition is in process, and I think I just wanted to clarify that we are bringing this issue to you today because we do think it has bearing on how the company will--how we can predict the company will act, and whether--and what they're considering and what kind of constraints and pressures they're under in deciding whether to conduct this tube replacement that they've said they're planning to do.

And so that's why we wanted to bring these issues to your attention and bring that proceeding to your attention. We believe the company is under a lot of financial pressure to put off this tube replacement as long as possible, which is part of why they've put this tube replacement off so long while these unplanned power changes continue for such a long period of time, and until the company makes a decision about whether it's going to continue operating for a long period of time, we predict they won't want to invest in such an expensive repair and replacement. So that's why we wanted to bring these to your attention, not to suggest that these two petitions should be joined.

MR. JUDSON: That's right, and this is Tim, and just to add to that, I think the additional

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context in which we wanted to raise those issues was with respect to NRC might conduct a cost-benefit analysis in deciding sort of how to provide regulatory enforcement on this issue in particular, and we would just like to sort of be out there up front, sort of calling attention to our concerns about how NRC might conduct that cost-benefit analysis and what factors it may consider.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay, thank you very much,

Tim and Jessica for that clarification. The NRC staff

here do not have any additional questions, I guess

Dave, any final comments for the Board?

MR. LOCHBAUM: This is Dave Lochbaum, I just--I should have done it at the opening. I wanted to thank Mohan Thadani for arranging this meeting. We went through a couple of iterations because of the Government shutdown, but he did a fantastic job of setting us up and arranging this, and I appreciate that effort and the extra effort he had to go through because of the Government shutdown that was beyond his control. So I appreciate that.

MR. THADANI: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay, thanks for the acknowledgment, Dave. I guess before--so we'll get ready to conclude the meeting. I did want to just

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clarify one thing I mentioned in my opening remarks.
I said the wrong date for the petition; I said July
23, but the date of the petition is actually July 25,
so I wanted to clarify that. So before I conclude the
meeting, I know we have some members of the public on
the phone, I'd like to perhaps take the opportunity
here to see if any members of the public have any
questions for the NRC on the process, not the merits
of the petition we just discussed, but are there any
questions from members of the public on the phone
about how the NRC dispositions 2.206 petitions?
MR. GUNTHER: This is Paul Gunter with
Beyond Nuclear; I don't have any questions at this
point.
CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay, thank you, Paul.
All right, well Mr. Lochbaumokay, does the licensee
have any questions about the NRC's 2.206 petition
process?
MR. KORS: No, we do not.
CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay, thank you. Thank
you, Mohan. Okay, I'd like toexcuse me?
MR. KORS: Just giving you my name, Ken
Kors.
CHAIRMAN NIEH: Oh, okay. Thank you, Ken.
Okay, well Dave and Jessica and Tim, thank you for

1	taking the time to talk with the Board today, I found
2	your remarks helpful and we'll consider them in
3	addition to the petition that was submitted on July
4	25, 2013. And with that, the meeting is adjourned.
5	Thank you.
6	MR. LOCHBAUM: Thank you. Bye.
7	MS. AZULAY: Thank you.
8	[Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at
9	2:02 p.m.]
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