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Station, Unit 1: Evening Session

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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PUBLIC MEETING ON DRAFT
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT FOR GRAND
GULF NUCLEAR STATION
EVENING SESSION

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

Hearing Room
Port Gibson Hall
1005 College Street
Port Gibson, Mississippi

The above-entitled hearing was conducted
at 7:00 p.m.

BEFORE: BOB HAGAR, Facilitator

NRC STAFF:

- DAVID DRUCKER
- BRIAN D. WITTICK
- RICHARD SMITH
- BLAKE RICE
- VICTOR DRICKS

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. HAGAR: We're kind of doing an
3 abbreviated meeting. My name is Bob Hagar. I am a
4 member of the NRC's facilitation corps, and my job
5 here is to facilitate this meeting, and what that
6 means is to give you guys an opportunity to speak;
7 well, basically to make sure that anybody who wants
8 to say something in this meeting has an opportunity
9 to say it without interruption.

10 But before we get started, there's some
11 details about the meeting that you need to know;
12 that is that the meeting is going to be in three
13 parts. Part one is when the NRC staff is going to
14 go through this presentation to talk about the
15 subject matter.

16 Part two is when you are going to have an
17 opportunity to ask questions to clarify this
18 material, and NRC staff will answer those
19 questions. And then part three of the meeting is
20 going to be a time when you can provide the
21 feedback that this presentation is asking for, or
22 you can say anything else you want to say without
23 interruption. So that is one of the details. The
24 meeting is going to be in three parts.

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1 The second detail about the meeting that
2 is important is that the NRC has to produce a
3 transcript of this meeting. And to do that, we are
4 recording this meeting. And so to make sure the
5 recording is clear, we have to set up some ground
6 rules. One ground rule is that if you are going to
7 speak, you have got to speak into a microphone.
8 That's why I am using a microphone, even though
9 this room is small enough I don't need one. We
10 need it to record what I say.

11 So if you are going to speak, you need to
12 speak into a microphone too. And if you need to
13 speak, you raise your hand. I will bring the
14 microphone to you. One -- that's one.

15 The second thing is that only one person
16 can speak at a time, so please don't interrupt a
17 speaker, because if we -- if two people speak at
18 the same time, from the recording we can't tell
19 what anybody said.

1 And third is we can't have any background
2 noise, so we can't have side conversations and
3 can't have electronic noise. So please right now,
4 if you haven't already, turn off your personal
5 electronics. So I guess that's all you need
6 to know about the meeting. So are you okay with
7 the ground rules? You understand the ground rules?
8 You're okay with that?

9 (No verbal response.)

10 MR. HAGAR: Right. I'm going to turn the
11 meeting over to David Drucker then. Now, he's the
12 first speaker. When he gets done, I will come back
13 for the question-and-answer period, and after that,
14 we'll move into phase three of the meeting. Thank
15 you.

16 MR. DRUCKER: Thanks, Bob. And thank you
17 all for coming out tonight. My name is David
18 Drucker, and I'm the project manager for the
19 environmental review of the Grand Gulf Nuclear
20 Station license renewal application.

21 I just want to introduce -- and if you
22 all want to switch seats, please do. I'm sorry
23 about the pole being in our way, but whatever; make
24 yourself comfortable there.

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1 I want to introduce first of all, my
2 supervisor, Brian Wittick. He is sitting on my
3 immediate left. He has come with me from
4 Rockville, Maryland. And to his left is Richard
5 Smith. And he's the senior resident inspector at
6 Grand Gulf. And then sitting out here in the
7 audience is Victor Dricks, and Victor is the public
8 affairs officer for Region IV, and he has come out
9 from Arlington, Texas. So that is the NRC
10 contingent that is with us tonight.

11 I hope the information we provide with
12 this presentation will help you understand what we
13 have done so far and the role you can play in
14 helping us make sure that the final Environmental
15 Impact Statement is accurate and complete.

1 So I would like to emphasize that the
2 environmental review is not yet complete. I would
3 like to start off by briefly going over the agenda
4 and purpose of this presentation, at which time, I
5 will discuss the NRC's regulatory role, the
6 preliminary findings of our environmental review,
7 which addresses the impacts associated with
8 extending the operating license of the Grand Gulf
9 Nuclear Station for an additional 20 years. And I
10 will present the current schedule for the remainder
11 of the environmental review and how you can submit
12 comments outside this meeting. At the end
13 of this presentation, there will be time for
14 questions and answers on the environmental review
15 process and, most importantly, time for you to
16 present your comments on the Draft Supplemental
17 Environmental Impact Statement, which we call the
18 SEIS, or the Draft SEIS.

19 And here is a copy of it right here.
20 There's hard copies out on the table in the hallway
21 and also CDs. If you want, you can take them with
22 you tonight.

1 The NRC was established to regulate the
2 civilian use of nuclear materials, including
3 facilities producing electric power. The NRC
4 conducts license renewal reviews for plants whose
5 owners wish to operate them beyond their initial
6 license period. NRC license renewals
7 address safety issues related to managing the
8 effects of aging and environmental issues related
9 to an additional 20 years of operation. In all
10 aspects of the NRC's regulation, our mission is
11 threefold: to ensure adequate protection of public
12 health and safety, to promote common defense and
13 security, and to protect the environment.

14 We are here to discuss the potential
15 site-specific impacts of license renewal for Grand
16 Gulf. The Generic Environmental Impact Statement,
17 or GEIS, examines the possible environmental
18 impacts that could occur as a result of renewing
19 licenses of individual nuclear plants. The GEIS
20 establishes and bounds the significance of
21 potential impacts.

22 The analysis in the GEIS pertains to
23 operating power plants. For each type of
24 environmental impact, the GEIS establishes general
25 findings covering as many plants as possible.

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1 For some environmental issues, the GEIS
2 found that a generic evaluation was not sufficient
3 and that a plant specific analysis was required.
4 The site-specific findings for Grand Gulf are
5 contained in the Draft Supplemental Environmental
6 Impact Statement, or Draft SEIS, published in
7 November 2013.

8 This document contains analyses of all
9 applicable site-specific issues, as well as a
10 review of issues covered by the GEIS, to determine
11 whether the conclusions in the GEIS are valid for
12 Grand Gulf. In this process, the NRC staff also
13 reviews the environmental impacts of potential
14 power generation alternatives to license renewal.

15 For each issue identified, an impact
16 level was assigned. The NRC established three
17 levels of significance for potential impacts:
18 small, moderate and large, as defined on the slide.

19 For small impact, the effects are not
20 detectable or are so minor, that they will neither
21 destabilize nor noticeably alter any important
22 attribute of the resource.

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1 For a moderate impact, the effects are
2 sufficient to alter noticeably but not to
3 destabilize important attributes of the resource.
4 For a large impact, the effects are clearly
5 noticeable and are sufficient to destabilize
6 important attributes of the resource.

7 For protected species and habitats, that
8 resource, the impact significance determination
9 language is specific to the authorizing legislation
10 which is the Endangered Species Act. So we don't
11 use small, moderate and large for protected species
12 and habitat, and you'll see on the next slide what
13 we do use.

14 This slide lists the site-specific issues
15 that NRC staff reviewed for the continued operation
16 of Grand Gulf during the proposed license renewal
17 period. Overall, the impacts of license renewal on
18 all these issues were found to be small, which
19 means the effects are not detectable and are so
20 minor that they will neither destabilize nor
21 noticeably alter any important attribute of the
22 resource.

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1 This slide provides a summary of our
2 findings with respect to cumulative impacts
3 associated with Grand Gulf. Cumulative impacts
4 include the effects on the environment from other
5 past, present, and the reasonably foreseeable
6 future human actions. These effects not
7 only include the operation of Grand Gulf but also
8 the impacts from activities unrelated to Grand
9 Gulf, such as future urbanization or other energy
10 producing facilities in the area. This analysis
11 considers potential impacts through the end of the
12 current license term as well as the 20-year renewal
13 license term.

14 While the level of direct and indirect
15 impacts of Grand Gulf on aquatic and terrestrial
16 resources are small, as shown on the previous
17 slide, the cumulative impacts, when combined with
18 all other sources, would be moderate for aquatic
19 and terrestrial resources. This is primarily due
20 to historical Mississippi River modifications. And
21 in all other areas considered, the staff
22 preliminarily concluded that cumulative impacts are
23 small.

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1 The National Environmental Policy Act
2 mandates that each Environmental Impact Statement
3 consider alternatives to any proposed major federal
4 action. A major step in determining whether
5 license renewal is reasonable or not is comparing
6 the likely impacts of continued operation of the
7 nuclear plant with the likely impacts of
8 alternative means of power generation.

9 Alternatives must provide an option that
10 allows for power generation capability beyond the
11 term of the current nuclear power plant operating
12 license to meet future generating needs. In the
13 Draft SEIS, NRC staff initially considered 16
14 different alternatives, and then we chose four of
15 these alternatives to be analyzed in depth, and
16 they are listed on the slide.

17 Finally, the NRC staff considered what
18 would happen if no action is taken and Grand Gulf
19 shuts down at the end of its current license
20 without a specific replacement alternative. This
21 alternative would not provide power generation
22 capacity nor would it meet the needs being
23 fulfilled by Grand Gulf.

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1 The NRC's preliminary conclusion is that
2 the environmental impacts of renewal of the
3 operating license for Grand Gulf would be smaller
4 than those feasible and commercially viable
5 alternatives.

6 The no-action alternative would have
7 small environmental impacts in most areas, with the
8 exception of socioeconomic impacts, which would be
9 small to large. Continued operation would have
10 small environmental impacts in all areas. The
11 staff preliminarily concluded that continued
12 operation of the existing Grand Gulf Nuclear
13 Station is the environmentally preferred
14 alternative.

15 Based on the review of likely
16 environmental impacts from license renewal as well
17 as potential environmental impacts of alternatives
18 to license renewal, the NRC staff's preliminary
19 recommendation in the Draft SEIS is that the
20 adverse environmental impacts of license renewal
21 for Grand Gulf are not great enough to deny the
22 option of license renewal for energy-planning
23 decision makers.

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1 For the term beyond the 20-year period of
2 extended operation, the NRC addresses the
3 management of spent nuclear fuel in a waste
4 confidence decision and rule. Previous license
5 renewal Supplemental EIS noted that the
6 environmental impacts of temporary storage of
7 nuclear fuel for the period following the reactor
8 operating license term were addressed by this rule.

9 This Draft SEIS does not discuss
10 potential environmental impacts of storing spent
11 fuel for an extended period after the plant shuts
12 down. That issue will be addressed in the NRC's
13 waste confidence Environmental Impact Statement and
14 rule.

15 The draft rule and EIS were issued in the
16 fall of 2013, and the public had the opportunity to
17 provide comments. The final EIS and rule is
18 expected to be issued in the fall of 2014.
19 Additional information on the waste confidence
20 ruling and EIS can be found on the NRC public web
21 link at the link listed on the slide.

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1 In August 2012, the Commission decided
2 that the Agency will not issue licenses dependent
3 upon the waste confidence decision until the waste
4 confidence rule is completed. However, the
5 Commission directed the staff to proceed with
6 licensing reviews and proceedings.

7 If the results of the waste confidence
8 EIS and rule identify information that impacts this
9 analysis in this Supplemental EIS for Grand Gulf,
10 the NRC staff will perform the appropriate review
11 for those issues and may supplement the SEIS before
12 the NRC makes a final licensing decision as to
13 whether or not to renew Grand Gulf's license. If
14 no changes are required, the NRC staff will base
15 its decision on the final Supplemental EIS, the
16 waste confidence EIS and rule, regional
17 inspections, and the safety evaluation report.

18 I would like to reemphasize that the
19 environmental review is not yet complete. Your
20 comments today and all written comments received by
21 the end of the comment period on February 11 will
22 be considered by the NRC staff as we develop the
23 final SEIS, which we currently plan to issue in
24 September 2014.

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1 Those comments that are within the scope
2 of the environmental review and provide new and
3 significant information can help to change the
4 staff's findings. The final SEIS will contain the
5 staff's final recommendation on the acceptability
6 of license renewal based on the work we have
7 already performed and any new and significant
8 information we receive in the form of comments
9 during this comment period.

10 I am the primary contact for the
11 environmental review, and John Daily is the primary
12 contact for the safety review, and his -- our
13 contact information is up on the slide. Copies of
14 the Draft SEIS are available on CD and hard copy in
15 the entryway.

16 And in addition, the Henrietta Person
17 Memorial Library has a hard copy available for
18 review, and you can also find electronic copies of
19 the Draft SEIS, along with other information about
20 the Grand Gulf license renewal review, online at
21 the website shown. And in addition, I just want to
22 say that copies of these slides are available
23 outside in the hallway for pickup, too.

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1 NRC staff will address written comments
2 in the same way we address spoken comments received
3 today. You can submit written comments, either
4 online or via conventional mail. To submit written
5 comments online, visit the website regulations.gov
6 and search for Docket ID NRC-2011-0262.

7 If you have written comments today, you
8 may give them to any NRC staffer. I would
9 appreciate them. If you're going to provide them
10 to any NRC staffer, please give them to me. And
11 this concludes my presentation. So I am turning it
12 back over to Bob. MR. HAGAR: All right.

13 That was part one of the meeting. This is part
14 two. Do you have any questions about any of the
15 topics that David discussed?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. HAGAR: Okay. Body language in the
18 negative says no. Okay.

19 So now we move to part three of the
20 meeting. Do you have any comments addressing this
21 environmental impact license renewal or about
22 license renewal in general? Do you want to say
23 anything?

24 (No response.)

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1 MR. HAGAR: Okay. Again, body language
2 in the negative. I am going to say that no one has
3 any questions in part three of the meeting.

4 So with that, David, do you have any
5 closing comments?

6 MR. DRUCKER: Yes. I would like to thank
7 Bob Hagar for facilitating today's meeting, coming
8 all of the way out from Texas to do that. And I
9 would like to thank our resident inspector who is
10 here this evening. We had the other one was --
11 Blake Rice was out here this afternoon.

12 I would also like to thank Victor Dricks
13 for coming out to support this, from Region Four.
14 Thanks to Bob Smiley, our AV guy. Sue, thank you
15 for transcribing. And thanks mostly to my boss for
16 taking me out here in this terrible weather. So
17 that's it. Thanks.

18 MR. HAGAR: All right. Thank you for
19 your attention. This meeting is adjourned.

20 (Whereupon, 7:20 p.m., the meeting was
21 concluded.)

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