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Environmental Impact Statement for an Early Site Permit at the PSEG Site

Comment On: NRC-2014-0149-0008
Early Site Permit for the PSEG Site; Extension of Comment Period

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Comment on FR Doc # 2014-26301

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Submitter Information

Name: Chantel Williams

General Comment

See attached file(s)

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Attachments

Salem 4 Group Sign Us On Nov 2014

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SUNSI Review Complete
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Add= *A. Fetter (ahf)*

**Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Clean Water Action
Cohansey Area Watershed Association ~ Delaware Audubon Society
Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club
Delaware River Shad Fisherman's Association (DRSFA) ~ Lenape Nation PA
New Jersey Sierra Club ~ South Jersey Land & Water Trust
Tidewaters Gateway Partnership Inc.**

December 2, 2014

Ms. Cindy Bladey
Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch
Office of Administration
Mail Stop: 3WFN-06-A44M
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Re: Docket ID NRC-2014-0149; Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Early Site Permit for the PSEG Site (NUREG-2168)

Dear Ms. Bladey,

This letter provides comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Early Site Permit (ESP) for the Public Service Electric and Gas Company Nuclear, LLC (PSEG) site located on Artificial Island in Lower Alloways Creek Township, Salem County, New Jersey. As part of the review of PSEG's ESP application, NRC has prepared a draft EIS which describes the effects on the environment of building and operating a new nuclear power plant at the site.

We believe that the draft EIS is inadequate in assessing the potential environmental impacts and that additional information, research, and data should be evaluated. Once the missing information is evaluated, it should be apparent that NRC should not grant this ESP due to the significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the possible future use of the PSEG Site to construct and operate a new nuclear power plant.

According to the Draft EIS for an ESP at the PSEG site dated August 2014, the project would include/require:

- Permanent impact to 108 acres of wetlands for the new nuclear power plant.

- Permanent impact to 45.5 acres of undeveloped wetlands protected under Deeds of Conservation Restriction within the Alloway Creek Watershed Wetland Restoration Site, the Abbott's Meadow Wildlife Management Area, and the Mad Horse Creek Wildlife Management Area for the construction of the proposed causeway.
- Permanent loss of 40 acres of ponds and of 9,585 linear feet of creek channel.
- Dredging and the removal of sediment from the Delaware River for building new intake and discharge structures and resulting in physical alteration of aquatic habitat due to infilling, cofferdam placement, dredging, and pile driving.
- Clearing of vegetation that has the potential to affect wildlife including important and potentially threatened or endangered terrestrial and aquatic species.
- Permanent impacts to fish populations from construction and from operation of the nuclear power plant due to impingement and entrainment, high temperature discharges, loss of food and forage habitat, and pollution discharges.
- Water quality impacts to the Delaware River from the construction and operation of a nuclear power plant including stormwater runoff, additional thermal pollution, and plant discharges.
- Consumptive loss of water from the Delaware River due to the operation of the nuclear power plant including more than 26,000 gallons per minute of brackish water, 5,000 gallons per minute of freshwater, and up to 1,000 gallons per minute of groundwater.
- Land committed to the disposal of radioactive and nonradioactive wastes.

Comment 1: A Contested Hearing is needed on this highly controversial and environmentally damaging proposal. We request that the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) conduct a contested hearing.

Comment 2: The proposal results in unacceptable permanent and temporary impacts to wetlands. Generally, the only way to adequately protect aquatic resources is to avoid impacting them in the first place. Constructing upon such a large acreage of wetlands in the Delaware estuary will contribute to the decline in wetland resources.

Comment 3: There is limited discussion and analysis of avoidance/ minimization measures. Avoidance/ minimization should be explicit and carried out in a way that compensatory mitigation is only used as a last case resort, and the avoidance/minimization measures should be the subject of public review and comment. Furthermore, the analysis of compensatory actions is inadequate without knowing what actions are actually being implemented to avoid or minimize impacts.

Comment 4: The NRC asserts as justification that Phragmites dominated wetlands are degraded and their ruination is somehow less impactful but this perspective is not supported by the science. Furthermore, the unsubstantiated assumption that converting a *Phragmites* dominated wetland to a *Spartina alterniflora* wetland will enhance the ecological value of the proposed mitigation sites is also faulty. This false assumption makes the evaluation of the proposed project inadequate, and also influences the evaluation of mitigation measures. PSEG's own data, as well as research by others,

demonstrates this to be false and that Phragmites-dominated wetlands are usable and used by a variety of species.

Comment 5: The description of potential mitigation measures is vague. The mitigation plans should be explicitly developed and evaluated, especially given the likelihood for adverse impacts that some of the “potential” mitigation methods could have on the local environment (i.e. herbicide use). Furthermore, mitigation methods should be the subject of public review and comment. Wetlands are an important terrestrial resource and provide habitat for wildlife in the Delaware River watershed. It is imperative that any impacts to these important resources are mitigated appropriately and that an approved wetlands restoration or rehabilitation program actually enhances the ecosystem resources.

Comment 6: The review of “potential” mitigation methods is necessary because methods using herbicides and more specifically, Glyphosate, have detrimental impacts to the environment. PSEG’s previous mitigation plans have been largely dependent upon the use of the broad spectrum herbicide glyphosate that is dangerous to the environment and to people. The ecosystem services provided by the wetland mitigation sites should be weighed against the environmental damages caused by the use of herbicides and glyphosate.

Comment 7: No scientific research was analyzed to support the assumption that the impacts to aquatic resources would be temporary. The NRC needs to evaluate both the short-term and long-term impacts on aquatic species of construction noise and increases in barge/ vessel traffic noise as a result of the proposed project. There is an increasing amount of awareness and research on the effect of anthropogenic sounds in the aquatic environment and how these sounds affect aquatic mammals, diving birds, fishes, amphibian, reptiles, and invertebrates. The construction phase of a project, despite being temporary, has the potential for the greatest impact on aquatic species, and of the construction activities, pile driving and increased vessel traffic is of great concern.

Comment 8: The dredging and construction of a new barge mooring facility will cause immediate and ongoing damage to the Delaware River which was not fully analyzed. The negative effects on water quality through the resuspension of toxics from dredging and through vessel-related discharges should be evaluated and weighed against the need for a new barge storage/ unloading area.

Comment 9: The impacts of sea level rise are not adequately addressed within the Draft EIS especially considering the site is located in a region that will be consistently under or surrounded by water raising the potential for a catastrophic nuclear event and inhibiting the ability of emergency services to reach the facility at times when it will most likely be needed. The NRC should not issue an early site permit for a location in an area that will most likely flood and be inundated by sea level rise in the foreseeable future as is the case at this location.

Comment 10: Alternative energy options have not been given adequate consideration. Solar, geothermal, and new and emerging sustainable energy options, including increased efficiency and conservation, are not being given an appropriate level of consideration. Renewable energy sources based on current and near future technologies are capable of producing the baseload power targeted by PSEG.

The Delaware River is in great need of restoration and it is critical that decision-making is done such that proposed projects help improve water quality and wetland and aquatic ecosystems. A reevaluation of the deficient sections of the draft EIS will illustrate that the project as proposed will surely not accomplish a "no net loss" of aquatic resources.

Thank you again for consideration of our comments.

Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Jeff Tittel, Director, New Jersey Sierra Club
Richard H. Mc Nutt, President, Tidewaters Gateway Partnership Inc.
Shelley DePaul, Chief, Lenape Nation PA
David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action
Steve Hvozdovich, Pennsylvania Campaigns Director, Clean Water Action
Christine Nolan, Executive Director, South Jersey Land & Water Trust
Charles Furst, President, Delaware River Shad Fisherman's Association (DRSFA)
Amy Roe, Conservation co-Chair, Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club
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