

March 23, 2015

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Public Meeting Summary

Title: Public Meeting to Discuss draft Supplement 54 to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants Regarding Byron Station, Units 1 and 2 (TAC Nos. MF1834 and MF1835)

Meeting Identifier: 20142091

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Location: Byron Forest Preserve, Byron, IL

Type of Meeting: Category 3

Purpose of the Meeting(s):

The staff was to solicit stakeholder comments on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) which was prepared in response to an application submitted by Exelon Generation Company, LLC (Exelon), to renew the operating license for Byron Station, Units 1 and 2 (Byron), for an additional 20 years. The staff will evaluate comments received both at these meetings and any others received during the comment period, which ended February 20, 2012, and revise the draft SEIS as appropriate. Responses to all comments received will be included in Appendix A of the final SEIS.

General Details:

The NRC held two identical meetings to accommodate interested persons, one in the afternoon and the other in the evening. Both meetings were preceded by an informal open house beginning one hour prior to the meeting where members of the public met with NRC staff and asked questions related to license renewal. The afternoon meeting was scheduled from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST. The evening meeting was scheduled from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. CST. Seven NRC staff members were present. The meetings were facilitated by Ms. Cheryl Hausman, an NRC in-house facilitator. The meetings began with an introduction of NRC staff and a review of meeting ground rules, followed by a presentation on the license renewal process and the findings in the Byron draft SEIS by Ms. Lois James. The presentation emphasized that the review process was not yet complete and comments were welcome on the draft SEIS. Next, there was a question and answer period on Ms. James' presentation. Finally, there was the comment portion of the meetings in which the attendees provided comments.

Approximately 20 people participated in the afternoon meeting, and 13 people participated in the evening meeting. Ten meeting participant provided comments in the afternoon session, and three provided comments in the evening session. In addition to members of the public, meeting participants included representatives from Illinois Clean Energy Coalition, Byron Chamber of Commerce, Argonne National Laboratory, Rock River Sweep, Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Hoo Haven Wildlife, Sinnissippi Alliance (SAFE), Nuclear Energy Information Services (NEIS), and the applicant.

Summary of Presentation:

Both meetings consisted of three parts. The first part was a presentation by Ms. James discussing: (1) the NRC’s regulatory role, (2) the preliminary findings of the environmental review as described in the draft SEIS, and (3) the current schedule for the remainder of the environmental review and how comments can be submitted. The second part was a question and answer period on the material Ms. James presented. The third part was a public comment period.

A summary of Ms. James’ presentation follows: The NRC conducts license renewal reviews for plants whose owners wish to operate them beyond their initial license period. NRC license renewal reviews address safety issues related to managing the effects of aging and environmental issues related to an additional 20 years of operation. The environmental review performed by the NRC staff resulted in the findings of impacts shown in the table below for the site-specific issues associated with continued operation of Byron during the proposed license renewal period.

Resource Areas	Impact
Land Use & Visual Resources	SMALL
Air Quality & Noise	SMALL
Geological Environment	SMALL
Water Resources	SMALL
Terrestrial Resources	SMALL
Aquatic Resources	SMALL
Special Status Species and Habitats	No effect
Historic and Cultural Resources	No adverse effect
Socioeconomics	SMALL
Human Health	SMALL
Environmental Justice	No disproportionately high and adverse impacts
Waste Management	SMALL

The NRC staff also considered cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts include the effects on the environment from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future human actions. These effects not only include the operation of Byron but also impacts from activities unrelated to Byron, such as future urbanization, other energy producing facilities in the area, and climate change. The cumulative impacts on all resource areas were found to be SMALL with the following exceptions: (1) the cumulative impacts on terrestrial resources would be SMALL to MODERATE primarily due to agricultural runoff and residential development over the period of extended operation; (2) the cumulative impacts on aquatic ecology would be MODERATE primarily due to past river channelization and damming and ongoing runoff and sedimentation

from agriculture; and (3) the cumulative impacts of global climate change would be MODERATE primarily due to present and future global emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG).

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) mandates that each environmental impact statement consider alternatives to any proposed major Federal action. The NRC staff initially considered 17 different alternatives, then narrowed those to five alternatives (new nuclear; integrated gasification combined cycle; natural-gas combined-cycle; combination of natural-gas combined-cycle, wind, and solar; and purchase power) and considered these five in-depth. Additionally, the NRC staff considered what would happen if no action is taken and Byron shuts down at the end of its current licenses without a specific replacement alternative. The NRC staff's preliminary conclusion is that the environmental impacts of renewal of the operating licenses for Byron would be smaller than those of feasible and commercially viable alternatives. The NRC staff concluded that continued operation of the existing Byron is the environmentally preferred alternative.

Based on a review of likely environmental impacts from license renewal as well as potential environmental impacts of alternatives to license renewal, the NRC staff's preliminary recommendation in the draft SEIS is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Byron are not great enough to deny the option of license renewal for energy-planning decisionmakers.

It was noted that comments received by the end of the comment period on February 20, 2015, would be considered by the NRC staff in developing the final SEIS. The final SEIS will contain the staff's final recommendation on the acceptability of license renewal based on the work already performed and any new and significant information received during the comment period.

Public Participation Themes:

At the afternoon meeting, comments raised the following concerns that: (1) nuclear power is not viable as a clean source of energy, nor is nuclear energy environmentally sound or economically sound; (2) operational safety is in jeopardy as a result of Exelon announcing that Byron is not profitable and may be shutdown; (3) Byron does not have a good safety culture such that employees do not have the freedom to raise safety concerns; and (4) there are not sufficient funds for decommissioning. No concerns were raised in the comments provided at the evening meeting. A complete accounting of the comments provided can be found in the meeting transcripts which are available in the NRC's ADAMS public electronic reading room under the accession numbers listed below, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

Next Step:

NRC staff will address the comments provided during this meeting as part of the license renewal process for Byron. A record of how each comment was addressed will be included in the final SEIS.

Attachments:

- Meeting description and agenda – ML15020A003
- NRC staff presentation – ML15026A570
- Meeting transcripts – Afternoon transcript - ML15056A049
Evening transcript - ML15056A053

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ADAMS Accession Nos.: **(PKG)** **ML15061A020**
 (MEMO) **ML15061A018**
 (Afternoon Transcripts) **ML15056A049**
 (Evening Transcripts) **ML15056A053**

***concurring via email**

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