

April 17, 2015

The Honorable Paul O. Thompson, Chief
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
412 State Route 37
Hogansburg, NY 13655

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF ISSUANCE OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF THE BELL BEND
NUCLEAR POWER PLANT COMBINED LICENSE APPLICATION

Dear Chief Thompson:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application submitted by PPL Bell Bend, LLC (PPL) for a combined license (COL) for construction and operation of one new nuclear power plant at its Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant (BBNPP) site near Berwick, Pennsylvania. As part of its review of the proposed action, the NRC staff has prepared a draft environmental impact statement (EIS). The draft EIS, NUREG-2179, *Environmental Impact Statement for the Combined License for the Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant*, includes analyses of relevant environmental issues, including potential impacts and effects on historic properties, and documents the NRC staff's determination regarding the suitability of the proposed site for the construction and operation of a new nuclear power plant. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District (USACE), is a cooperating agency on the draft EIS.

A notice of availability of the draft EIS is anticipated to be published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in *the Federal Register* on April 24, 2015. The draft EIS is available for public inspection at the NRC Public Document Room, located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852, or from the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access Management System (ADAMS), which is accessible from the NRC's website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> under the accession numbers ML15103A012 and ML15103A025. The draft EIS can also be accessed online at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/col/bell-bend.html>. For your convenience, the draft EIS on CD is attached to a reader's guide. The guide is a detailed brochure that summarizes the draft EIS.

In a letter dated January 9, 2009 (ADAMS Accession No. ML083520420), the NRC staff notified you that it will comply with its obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, (NHPA) using the process set forth in Title 36 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 800.8(c) in lieu of the procedures set forth in 36 CFR 800.3 through 36 CFR 800.6. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC staff is using the preparation of the draft EIS required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, (NEPA), to comply with its obligations under Section 106 of the NHPA. In the January 9, 2009, letter and in a supplemental letter dated June 12, 2012 (ADAMS Accession No. ML12073A245), the NRC asked if you had any scoping comments for the NRC to consider in the DEIS. We are now requesting your comments on the draft EIS and on our conclusions regarding historic properties. We will address your comments in the final EIS.

The NRC and USACE review team conducted an environmental audit at the BBNPP site and reviewed information for cultural resources and historic properties within both the direct and indirect areas of potential effect (APE), as documented in reports prepared by PPL. The results of the NRC staff's review, including conclusions regarding the presence of cultural resources and historic properties within the APEs and the potential effects of the COL action on historic properties, are documented in this draft EIS. Chapter 2 describes historic properties and cultural resources located within the direct and indirect APEs for the BBNPP site. Chapter 4 discusses impacts to cultural resources during pre-construction and NRC-authorized construction, and Chapter 5 discusses impacts during operation of the proposed site. Chapter 7 addresses cumulative impacts to historic properties and cultural resources in the vicinity of the BBNPP site APEs.

On February 13, 2013, the USACE received the enclosed letter (ADAMS Accession No. ML13056A020) regarding consultation on the BBNPP site. The letter indicated that the SHPO concurred with the USACE's determination of no adverse effect on cultural resources provided that avoidance measures for USACE Permit 36LU288 are included as a special condition in the USACE permit. As stated on page 2-203 of the draft EIS, the USACE plans to include a special condition related to USACE Permit 36LU288.

The NRC and USACE plan to hold two public meetings to go over the analyses and results in the draft EIS on June 4, 2015, at the Bloomsburg University, Monty's Building Upper Campus, 400 East Second Street, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania 17815. The first meeting will convene at 3:00 p.m. and will continue until 5:30 p.m., as necessary. The second meeting will convene at 7:30 p.m. and will continue until 10:00 p.m., as necessary. The meetings will be transcribed and will include: (1) a presentation of the contents of the draft EIS and (2) the opportunity for interested government agencies, organizations, and individuals to provide comments on the draft EIS. Additionally, the NRC and USACE staff will host informal discussions one hour before the start of each meeting during which members of the public may meet and talk with staff members on an informal basis. You and your staff are invited to attend.

Please provide any information or comments you feel are appropriate on the draft EIS during the comment period, which ends on July 7, 2015. Comments can be submitted: (1) by mail to the Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch (RADB), Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail stop: OWFN 12-H08, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001; (2) by e-mail to BBNP.COLEIS@nrc.gov; or (3) in person during the public meetings.

P. Thompson

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If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff's environmental review of this COL application, please contact environmental project managers Ms. Tomeka Terry at 301-415-1488 or via e-mail at Tomeka.Terry@nrc.gov, or Ms. Patricia Vokoun at 301-415-3470 or via email at Patricia.Vokoun@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Jennifer Dixon-Herrity, Chief
Environmental Projects Branch
Division of New Reactor Licensing
Office of New Reactors

Docket No. 52-039

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If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff's environmental review of this COL application, please contact environmental project managers Ms. Tomeka Terry at 301-415-1488 or via e-mail at Tomeka.Terry@nrc.gov, or Ms. Patricia Vokoun at 301-415-3470 or via email at Patricia.Vokoun@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

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Jennifer Dixon-Herrity, Chief
Environmental Projects Branch
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Office of New Reactors

Docket No. 52-039

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ADAMS ACCESSION NUMBER: ML15090A389

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