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November 6, 2015

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
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LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2  
Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-11 and NPF-18  
NRC Docket Nos. 50-373 and 50-374

**Subject:** NRC Review of LaSalle County Station Ultimate Heat Sink License Amendment Request

**Reference:** Letter from D. M. Gullott (Exelon Generation Company, LLC) to U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, "Request for a License Amendment to LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2, Technical Specification 3.7.3, 'Ultimate Heat Sink,'" dated July 12, 2012

On July 12, 2012, Exelon Generation Company, LLC (EGC) submitted a License Amendment Request (LAR) to change the maximum allowable Technical Specifications (TS) temperature of the LaSalle County Station (LSCS) Ultimate Heat Sink (UHS) from a fixed limit of 101.25 °F to a temperature limit that varied with the observed diurnal cycle (referenced letter). EGC is concerned with the NRC's review of this LAR.

On March 27, 2014, more than a year and a half after initial LAR submittal, the NRC contacted EGC to discuss the methodologies and conservatisms of the LAR supporting analyses. EGC was informed that the NRC would need contractor support since the NRC technical staff did not have the requisite expertise to perform this review. The NRC subsequently classified the LSCS UHS LAR as a complex license amendment request. This conclusion was reached only after the NRC invested over 2,000 review hours and charged LSCS more than \$600,000 in review fees. The NRC awarded a contract to an outside vendor on August 12, 2014, for a total cost of \$44,646. The period of performance for this contract was from August 2014 to February 2015. But even after obtaining contractor support, the NRC charged an additional \$500,000 in review fees.

At the time the contract was awarded, the NRC informed EGC that the projected issuance date for a decision letter was March 2015, which was later delayed to April 2015. On April 20, 2015, the NRC Project Manager informed EGC that the contractor work was complete, there were no technical concerns with the LSCS UHS analyses, and no further requests for additional information were expected. However, the latest target issuance date of June 2015 was pushed to July 2015 due to delays in the NRC's "internal processing." On July 23, 2015, the NRC provided EGC with a draft Safety Evaluation to review for comment regarding proprietary information or factual errors.

Since July 2015, the NRC has again delayed the issuance date to August 2015, then September 2015, and most recently October 2015. However, as of the date of this letter (November 6, 2015) EGC has not received a decision letter. The reasons provided for these delays are to address Office of the General Counsel comments and NRC internal coordination issues. Presently, the LSCS UHS LAR has been pending for over three years and the NRC review fees exceed \$1.1 million.

EGC is concerned with several aspects of the NRC's performance related to this LAR review. The significant review costs incurred prior to the NRC determining that outside expertise was needed is very troubling, particularly since the total review fees are now in excess of \$1.1 million. Additionally, the significant delays in issuing the amendment following completion of the technical review are inconsistent with the NRC's Principles of Good Regulation. In a time when the NRC's Project Aim initiative seeks to make the agency more efficient and cost-effective, EGC encourages the NRC to evaluate why the LSCS UHS LAR incurred so many delays and resulted in fees of over \$1.1 million, and to apply those lessons-learned to other LARs going forward. A predictable and transparent LAR review process is essential to ensuring maximum NRC efficiency and reliability.

Respectfully,

Original Signed By J. Bradley Fewell

J. Bradley Fewell  
Senior Vice President Regulatory Affairs  
Exelon Generation Company, LLC

cc: Executive Director for Operations  
Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation  
Director, Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
NRC Regional Administrator, Region III