



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 5, 2017

Ms. Monica Sikes  
Endangered Species Coordinator  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office  
646 Cajundome Blvd., Suite 400  
Lafayette, LA 70506-4290

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR CONCURRENCE WITH THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S DETERMINATION THAT LICENSE RENEWAL OF WATERFORD STEAM ELECTRIC STATION, UNIT 3 IS NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PALLID STURGEON

Dear Ms. Sikes:

With this letter, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC; the staff) is forwarding you a copy of the biological evaluation the staff has prepared to comply with the provisions of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), in support of the staff's review of Entergy Louisiana, LLC and Entergy Operations, Inc.'s (collectively referred to as "Entergy") application for renewal of Facility Operating License No. NPF-38 for Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3 (WF3). The purpose of this letter is to request the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) concurrence with the NRC staff's ESA effect determination, as described below.

The NRC's Federal action is the decision whether to renew the WF3 operating license for an additional 20-year period. WF3 is currently licensed to operate through December 18, 2024. If NRC grants Entergy a renewed license, WF3 could continue to operate through December 18, 2044.

WF3 is a one-unit nuclear power reactor located on a 3,560-acre Entergy-owned property in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana. WF3 borders the west bank of the Mississippi River and lies 25 miles west of New Orleans, Louisiana, and 50 miles southeast of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. WF3's once-through cooling water system withdraws water from the Mississippi River at River Mile 129.6. Waste heat and combined effluents are discharged back to the Mississippi River approximately 600 feet downstream of the withdrawal point.

The NRC staff evaluated the potential impacts of WF3 license renewal on three federally listed species identified in an official species list obtained through the FWS's Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) tool.<sup>1</sup> The three species are: pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), and West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*). In the enclosed

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from FWS to NRC. Subject: Waterford Steam Electric Station Unit 3, Updated list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project. Consultation Code: 04EL1000-2016-SLI-0334. April 13, 2017. Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. [ML17103A180](#).

biological evaluation, the NRC staff evaluated the impacts of entrainment, impingement, thermal effects, exposure to radionuclides and other contaminants, and reduction in available prey on the pallid sturgeon and found that these impacts would be insignificant, discountable, or both. Accordingly, the NRC staff concludes that the proposed license renewal “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the pallid sturgeon. The NRC staff determined that the gulf sturgeon and West Indian manatee do not occur in the action area based on a review of these species’ life histories, available ecological studies, and other species occurrence information. For these species, the NRC staff determined that the proposed license renewal would have “no effect.”

The NRC staff submits the enclosed biological evaluation for your review and requests your concurrence with its determination that WF3 license renewal “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the pallid sturgeon within 30 days of receipt of this letter in accordance with Title 50 of the *Code of Federal Regulation* (50 CFR) 402.12(j). I respectfully request that if you are unable to make such a determination within this time that you contact Ms. Briana Grange of my staff to discuss an alternate review timeline. Ms. Grange’s contact information appears below. Although the NRC staff understands that the FWS does not typically provide its concurrence with “no effect” determinations, the staff welcomes any comments you may have related to the gulf sturgeon and West Indian manatee.

Additionally and for your awareness, in parallel with the NRC staff’s ESA review, the NRC is performing an environmental review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The staff anticipates issuing a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) in September 2017. The staff will forward your office a copy of the draft SEIS for your review and comment once it is issued.

Should you have any questions about this letter or the staff’s biological evaluation, please contact Ms. Briana Grange, Aquatic Biologist, at 301-415-1042 or by e-mail at [briana.grange@nrc.gov](mailto:briana.grange@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

/RA/

Benjamin Beasley, Chief  
Environmental Review and  
Project Management Branch  
Division of License Renewal  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-382

Enclosure:  
Biological Evaluation

cc: Listserv

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**ADAMS Accession Nos.: ML17163A168 (PKG) ML17163A170 (LTR) ML17163A185 (ENCL)**

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| OFFICE | LA:RPGB:DLR | AB:RERP:DLR | PM:RERP:DLR | BC:RERP:DLR |
| NAME   | YEdmonds*   | BGrange*    | EKeegan*    | BBeasley    |
| DATE   | 6/21/17     | 6/21/17     | 6/27/17     | 7/5/17      |

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