50-335/389

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

October 7, 1998

Ms. Colleen Coogan
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Region
Protected Species Division
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Dear Ms. Coogan,

In a letter dated May 8, 1998, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provided the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) with a revision to the incidental take statement (ITS) of the February 7, 1998, biological opinion (BO). The BO addressed the impacts to marine endangered species from continued operation of the St. Lucie Nuclear Generating Plant. The revision was the result of a meeting between NMFS, NRC, and Florida Power and Light (FPL), the licensee for the St. Lucie Nuclear Generating Plant. The NRC forwarded the revised ITS to FPL by letter dated June 17, 1998, and requested the St. Lucie plant to implement the revised provisions of the ITS. By letter dated August 26, 1998, FPL provided the proposed changes to the St. Lucie Environmental Protection Plans (EPPs) that would implement the ITS.

One of the provisions of the revised ITS requested FPL to implement a program to monitor for turtles at the cooling water intake wells. The provision requested FPL to provide a proposal for the intake well monitoring program for NMFS review and approval. Included in the August 26, 1998, letter was the proposed intake well monitoring program (Enclosure 1) to be forwarded to NMFS. Another provision of the revised ITS requested FPL to design and implement a study to elucidate the effect of various factors on turtle entrapment. The condition stated that FPL shall provide NMFS with the proposed plan for conducting the study. Enclosure 2 is a draft of the request for proposal for NMFS review and approval. Providing the documents to NMFS now will allow aspects of the monitoring program and study to be discussed by NMFS, NRC, and FPL or its contractor prior to implementation.

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DFO1

Please contact Claudia M. Craig, (301) 415-1053 of my office to provide the NMFS comments and/or approval of the monitoring program and study, or a schedule by which approval will be granted.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Essig, Acting Chief
Generic Issues and Environmental
Projects Branch
Division of Reactor Program Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures: As stated

Docket Nos. 50-335, 389

cc: Ms. Hilda Diaz-Soltero, Director
Office of Protected Resources
National Maritime Fisheries Service
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Mr. E.J. Weinkam
Licensing Manager
St. Lucie Nuclear Plant
6351 South Ocean Drive
Jensen Beach, FL 34957

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INTAKE WELL MONITORING PROGRAM

Operations:

The intake well observations by the Operations Department personnel are delineated in Operations Instruction, O-OI-99-02. The intake wells on both units are inspected once per shift by plant operators.

Security:

Security Force Instruction, SFI #4, requires security officers to inspect the wells on both units for turtles between December 1 and March 31 of each year during their perimeter patrols. This is normally the period when turtles are stressed by colder water temperatures and cannot escape the current in the proximity of the intakes. The ability for turtles to survive in the well is also reduced when in a stressed condition. These inspections occur at various times during a security shift. For security reasons, the inspections are not performed at any standard periodicity.

If turtles are observed in the vicinity of the intake wells, biology personnel are notified and respond with directed capture efforts.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PHYSICAL AND ECOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SEA TURTLE ENTRAINMENT LEVELS AT ST. LUCIE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

In accordance with the Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act, Florida Power & Light Company is soliciting proposals from qualified entities for a study to examine potential factors responsible for increases in sea turtle entrainment in recent years. The successful proposal will review existing St. Lucie Plant turtle capture data and integrate with available literature on population dynamics of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* in the Florida east central coast area and examine aspects of plant siting, design, and operating characteristics relating to sea turtle entrainment at St. Lucie Plant. FPL envisions that the study will use existing, available data, and will not require any field research.

BACKGROUND

A copy of the most recent St. Lucie Plant Annual Environmental Operating Report is appended to this request for proposals to provide background information on plant design and operating characteristics and a detailed summary of sea turtle entrainment history at the plant.

SCOPE OF WORK

1) Provide a general overview of St. Lucie Plant design and operation.

2) Review St. Lucie Plant sea turtle entrainment history.

3) Based on St. Lucie Plant baseline studies, existing aerial photographs, and other literature, evaluate habitat types found in the near shore environment adjacent to the plant with respect to suitability as developmental and foraging habitats for size classes of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* commonly entrained at the plant.

4) Examine the influence of variation in intake flow rates during plant outages on sea turtle entrainment rates.

5) Examine seasonal patterns of entrainment rates and the influence of oceanographic and meteorological events (e.g. upwellings, storms) on entrainment rates.

6) Based on design drawings and available video inspection footage, evaluate the offshore intake structures with respect to potential attractiveness as feeding and/or shelter sites.

7) Examine St. Lucie Plant capture/recapture data to determine the degree of site fidelity for size classes of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* commonly entrained at the plant.

8) Review the available literature on population trends of size classes of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* commonly entrained at the plant, with particular attention to population trends in the Florida east central coast.

9) Attend two meetings at the St. Lucie Plant. The first meeting will be a project kick off meeting and the second meeting will be toward the end of the project once the first draft of the report is completed and prior to final editing of the report.

AVAILABLE DATA

FPL will make available the extensive database on all turtles captured at the plant including full morphometric data, recapture events, photographs, and annual summaries of data collected since 1981. FPL will also provide available data on intake structure design and installation, baseline environmental studies, aerial photographs, plant operating history, and available oceanographic and climatic data.

DELIVERABLE WORK PRODUCTS

The desired final product will be a report addressing the above scope submitted to FPL for transmittal to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. This work product shall be the property of FPL and distributed at the Company's sole discretion. FPL would also be supportive of publication of results of the study in a peer reviewed journal, and would provide funds for preparation, page charges, etc., with the understanding that St. Lucie Plant biological staff would be listed as co-authors. Additionally, the contractor shall provide periodic progress reports to FPL as required by NMFS.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Each proposal must contain a list of the personnel who will work on the study, a resume or curriculum vitae outlining publication history and qualifications, and their hourly rate. No overtime rates will be considered for this study. Proposals must include a detailed, specific methodology for addressing each item in the scope of work, a time line detailing the manner in which schedule requirements will be met, and identification of the sources of information to be used in the study. Each proposal must also include costs for preparing the study, conducting two meetings with FPL personnel at the St. Lucie Plant, and printing 15 copies of the report. The proposal must include any and all costs associated with the preparation of the study. These costs include, but are not limited to, such items as travel, hotels, meals, and rental transportation. All proposals must include a final lump sum cost which may not be exceeded and a schedule for

completion of the study. FPL retains the right not to select any contractors for this study if the proposals received do not meet our requirements.

SCHEDULE

Completed proposals must be submitted no later than January 1, 1999. Completion of a draft final report is anticipated six months from the date of formal issuance of the contract. Final report must be ready for submission by FPL to NMFS no later than January 31, 2000.