



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

October 1, 2018

Mr. Tom Clements  
Friends of the Earth, Senior Advisor  
1112 Florence Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTERS DATED AUGUST 14, 2018, AND  
SEPTEMBER 5, 2018, RELATED TO THE 40-YEAR LICENSE RENEWAL  
REVIEW FOR THE COLUMBIA FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY  
(DOCKET NUMBER: 70-1151)

Dear Mr. Clements:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letters dated August 14, 2018<sup>1</sup>, and September 5, 2018<sup>2</sup>, related to the license renewal review of the Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility (CFFF) in Richland County, South Carolina. In the letters, you expressed concerns about the recent events at the CFFF and requested that the NRC re-open its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and conduct a public meeting associated with the license renewal.

Your letters concern the NRC's review of the application filed by Westinghouse Electric Company, LLC (WEC) to renew special nuclear material (SNM) license number SNM-1107, authorizing the manufacture of nuclear fuel assemblies at the CFFF for use in commercial nuclear power plants for 40 years. The NRC provided public notice of the receipt and acceptance of WEC's application for license renewal and the opportunity to request a hearing in the *Federal Register* (FR) on February 27, 2015 (80 FR 10727). The NRC staff is currently conducting a detailed safety and security review of the application to determine if it meets all applicable NRC regulations and statutory requirements, including the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

In accordance with NEPA and the NRC's regulations in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 51, the NRC conducted a detailed environmental review of the proposed license renewal. The NRC's NEPA review of the license renewal application was documented in a final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) noticed in the FR on June 15, 2018 (83 FR 28014). Since that time, the NRC has received information regarding a newly discovered leak of hydrofluoric acid and uranium at the CFFF and WEC's planned characterization activities related to a 2011 underground pipe leak. Based on this new information, the NRC has decided to re-open its NEPA review. The NRC will either issue a draft revised EA and FONSI for public comment or, if the NRC staff cannot make a FONSI in light of the new information, the staff will proceed with the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If the NRC staff determines that an EIS needs to be developed, the NRC will notify the public of the opportunity and means to provide comments on the scope of the review by publishing a notice in the FR. All comments will be considered and addressed by the NRC staff before making any final environmental conclusions and issuing a final EA and FONSI or EIS.

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<sup>1</sup> Your August 14, 2018, letter can be found in Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS) under Accession No. ML18232A004.

<sup>2</sup> Your September 5, 2018, letter can be found in ADAMS under Accession No. ML18264A170.

In your August 14, 2018, letter, you requested that the NRC “reject consideration of the licensing extension for an additional 40 years.” The NRC’s review is ongoing and will consider all new information regarding the operation of the facility. Among other matters, the staff will evaluate the appropriate term, if any, for the renewed license based on all relevant circumstances. The NRC will not renew the license for the CFFF until the NRC staff has completed a detailed safety, security, and environmental review, and the licensee is able to demonstrate that the facility provides adequate protection of the public health and safety and the environment.

As I stated during the public community meeting in Lower Richland on August 30, 2018, the NRC is planning to host a public meeting to provide additional information to the public regarding the staff’s ongoing licensing review. The meeting will be held on October 11, 2018, and NRC staff will discuss the license renewal review process including the NEPA review, as well as NRC’s oversight role. The public meeting will be held at the Medallion Conference Center in Columbia, SC, from 6:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. The public meeting will be noticed on the NRC’s public website at <https://www.nrc.gov/pmns/mtg>. We encourage you to attend the meeting and ask any additional questions you might have. The NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC’s, “Rules of Practice,” a copy of this letter will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from our ADAMS. ADAMS is accessible through the NRC public Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

If you have any further questions about the NRC’s license renewal review, please contact my staff, Ms. Marilyn Diaz at 301-415-7110 or via email at [Marilyn.Diazmaldonado@nrc.gov](mailto:Marilyn.Diazmaldonado@nrc.gov). If you have further questions about NRC’s NEPA review, please contact Ms. Jessie Muir Quintero at 301-415-7476 or via email at [Jessie.Quintero@nrc.gov](mailto:Jessie.Quintero@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Brian W. Smith, Acting Director  
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety, Safeguards,  
and Environmental Review  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

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**DATED:** October 1, 2018

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**\* via email**

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