



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

October 5, 2018

Ms. Pamela Greenlaw, Chair  
John Bachman Group, Sierra Club  
1112 Florence Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTER RECEIVED ON AUGUST 17, 2018, RELATED TO  
THE 40-YEAR LICENSE RENEWAL REVIEW FOR THE COLUMBIA FUEL  
FABRICATION FACILITY (DOCKET NUMBER: 70-1151)

Dear Ms. Greenlaw:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter received on August 17, 2018<sup>1</sup>, related to the license renewal review of the Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility (CFFF) in Richland County, South Carolina. In the letter, 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, develop an effective means of communication with residents regarding incidents and discharges, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the NRC and define a schedule for the development, communication, training and posting of an evacuation plan. You also requested that the NRC "reject consideration of the licensing extension for an additional 40 years."

The NRC licenses and regulates the Nation's civilian use of radioactive materials. In this capacity, the NRC protects public health and safety and the environment, by ensuring compliance with NRC regulatory requirements and the specific provisions of the NRC license granted to Westinghouse for the CFFF. The NRC sets regulatory limits for radiation exposure to the public from NRC-regulated activities, including liquid effluents, which are found in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), Part 20.1301, "Dose limits for individual members of the public," and 10 CFR 20.1302, "Compliance with dose limits for individual members of the public." This includes radiological sources such as liquid and gaseous effluents and environmental monitoring programs used to demonstrate compliance with NRC requirements.

Your letter concerns 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.

Once the application is submitted by the licensee, in this case Westinghouse, and accepted by the NRC, the NRC's safety review evaluates all information regarding the operation of the facility, including Westinghouse's safety programs to determine whether there is reasonable assurance that the facility can and will be operated in a manner that will not be harmful to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession Number ML18232A392.

P. Greenlaw

common defense and security and will adequately protect the health and safety of workers, the public, and the environment.

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 has reasonable assurance that the facility provides adequate protection of the public health and safety and the environment.

In accordance with NEPA and the NRC's regulations in 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. Therefore, 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 Federal Register. 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.

In your letter, you asked about evacuation plans for the Westinghouse facility. The NRC does not require fuel cycle facilities to develop and communicate offsite evacuation plans for the public. Rather, the NRC requires applicants to develop emergency plans for responding to the radiological hazards of any accidental release of special nuclear material and associated chemical hazards including recommended protective actions. The NRC requirements require applicants to identify potential accidents, address how they are classified, and identify the means of detection, classification, mitigation, and assessment. In addition, the NRC requirements address prompt notification and coordination with local authorities who are responsible for evacuation planning and implementation.

In your letter, you also requested that the NRC develop an effective means of communication with residents regarding incidents and discharges. As part of its oversight responsibility, the NRC conducts inspections at the site and documents the results of those inspections for the public. The NRC also holds Licensee Performance Review public meetings periodically in Columbia, SC, which the public is invited to participate. In addition, the NRC requires Westinghouse to submit a semi-annual report specifying the quantity of each of the principal radionuclides released to unrestricted areas in liquid and gaseous effluents during operations. The inspection reports and effluent monitoring reports are publicly available and can be found at: <https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/fc/westinghouse-fuel-fab-fac-sc-lc.html><sup>2</sup>.

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 the 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 has been noticed on the NRC's public website at <https://www.nrc.gov/pmns/mtg>. We encourage you to attend the

---

<sup>2</sup> Event Reports documenting all incidents notified to the NRC can also be found at NRC website: <https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/fc/westinghouse-fuel-fab-fac-sc-lc.html>

P. Greenlaw

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, Mr. Matthew Bartlett at 301-415-7154 or via email at [Matthew.Bartlett@nrc.gov](mailto:Matthew.Bartlett@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

Docket No. 70-1151

P. Greenlaw

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTER RECEIVED ON AUGUST 17, 2018, RELATED TO THE  
40-YEAR LICENSE RENEWAL REVIEW FOR THE COLUMBIA FUEL  
FABRICATION FACILITY (DOCKET NUMBER: 70-1151)

DATED: October 5, 2018

**DISTRIBUTION:** MBartlett, FCSE; MDiaz, FCSE; JZimmerman, FCSE  
TVukovinsky, RGN II

**ADAMS Accession No. ML18271A135**

**\*via email**

<b>OFC</b>	FCSE/ERB	FCSE/FFLB	FCSE/ERB	FCSE/FFLB
<b>NAME</b>	JQuintero	MDiaz	AWalker-Smith	JZimmerman
<b>DATE</b>	09/05/18	9/28/18	10/01/18	10/03/18
<b>OFC</b>	OGC	FCSE/ERB	NMSS/FCSE	
<b>NAME</b>	*LClark	CRomán	BSmith	
<b>DATE</b>	10/01/18	10/03/18	10/05/18	

**OFFICIAL RECORD COPY**