

NRC PDR



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

NOV 28 1979

The Honorable Floyd J. Fithian
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Fithian:

This is in response to your letter of October 31, 1979, transmitting to Mr. Carlton C. Kammerer a request for information from Maureen Northacker, a constituent of yours.

Ms. Northacker expressed concern over the potential for impairment of the fishing industry by the nuclear industry. We would like to assure her that protection of the environment, and specifically of aquatic life, is given thorough consideration in the course of NRC's review and approval of any application to construct or operate a nuclear facility. NRC's procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) include the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for each such approval action. The EIS examines facility siting, design, construction, and operation to determine that reasonable steps have been taken to minimize environmental degradation and to determine whether the magnitude of residual environmental impacts is such as to preclude NRC licensing of the project.

Agencies with expertise in and responsibility for protection of fisheries are involved in the preparation of an EIS. The staff doing the environmental analysis consults directly with such agencies as necessary. Then a Draft Environmental Impact Statement is circulated for comment by Federal and State agencies and by interested members of the public. Comments received on the draft are considered in the preparation of the Final Environmental Statement. The Final Environmental Statement is submitted to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board which considers it in making a decision on licensing of the proposed project.

During the ten years since the passage of NEPA there has been a substantial evolution in planning and design practices in the electric utility industry

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and a comparable evolution of environmental review procedures among Federal agencies. Current practices result in a high degree of assurance that the potential for impairment of the fishing industry by the nuclear industry is indeed minimal.

Sincerely,

Original signed by R. G. Smith

Lee V. Gossick
Executive Director for Operations

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