

**GULF STATES UTILITIES COMPANY**

May 16, 1980

RBG - 7668  
File G9.5

Mr. Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Mr. Denton:

River Bend Station - Units 1 and 2  
Docket Nos. 50-458, 50-459

On March 11-12, 1980, members of your Staff met with representatives of Gulf States Utilities to discuss the projected construction schedule for the River Bend Station, Unit 1. The overall conclusion reached by your Staff, as stated in its April 23, 1980 meeting summary, was that "the Panel estimates Unit 1 will be completed about October, 1985, which is two years after the applicant's projection". Because of the importance that we at Gulf States accord to this project, it is our conviction that the projected Unit 1 schedule which would result in fuel loading in October, 1983, can be met. We recognize the importance of your being able to predict the workload for your staff as far in advance as possible so as to maximize the efficiency of their license application review. We, therefore, want to ensure that there is continuing communication between Gulf States and your Staff so that the NRC's licensing review schedule will not preclude meeting the date for fuel loading.

Gulf States recognizes its obligation to be less reliant on oil and gas fired generation while fulfilling the electrical demands of its customers. To help achieve this end, Gulf States has made a corporate commitment to complete the River Bend Station, Unit 1 on an accelerated schedule. The formation of the River Bend Nuclear Group on January 1, 1980, headed by an executive vice president, was an additional step in that direction.

Gulf States attempted to impress on the Staff during the Caseload Forecast meeting the innovations being used to expedite Unit 1 construction. First, a Nuclear Stabilization Agreement has been signed with national and local unions to preclude strikes or walk-outs during the duration of the construction. The importance of this agreement in a labor area as heavily represented by unions as the Baton Rouge area cannot be overemphasized. A second innovation has been the establishment of the rolling 4-10's working schedule. This schedule allows 70 hours of work per week to be accomplished with only one shift change. This working

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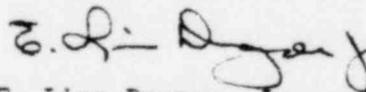
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arrangement already seems to be both efficient and popular with the work force as demonstrated by the low level of absenteeism experienced at the site. Third, modular construction techniques are being used to the fullest extent possible to allow less congested work areas and more efficient use of the labor force. For example, reinforcing bar ties for the containment base mat and turbine pedestals were made in modular form and placed by single crane lifts, the drywell wall was fabricated up to 10 rings high and then put in place by a single crane lift, and building levels will be completed as much as possible prior to placing the next floor to allow ease of equipment installation. These innovations will benefit the overall construction effort to permit the Unit 1 construction schedule to be met.

In conclusion, Gulf States believes that the construction progress (i.e., 10.2% as reported at the time of the meeting), as indicated by its calculated percentage complete, is an accurate and realistic representation of work accomplished in the field and that its schedule for fuel loading in October, 1983, can realistically be met. To assure that the NRC's efforts with regard to its consideration of the issuance of an operating license may be scheduled as warranted by actual progress in construction, we would invite the caseload forecast panel to periodically update its estimates. Inasmuch as we plan to submit our operating license application in March, 1981, we feel that the next caseload forecast meeting should be held in December, 1980. We look forward to working with you and your Staff in order to achieve a timely decision with regard to the issuance of the Unit 1 operating license. You can be assured that Gulf States will make every effort to cooperate with you and your Staff in reaching this goal.

Sincerely,



E. Linn Draper, Jr.  
Vice President - Technology

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