

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONTEXAS UTILITIES ELECTRIC COMPANY, ET AL.DOCKET NO. 50-446ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an extension to the latest construction completion date specified in Construction Permit No. CPPR-127 issued to Texas Utilities Electric Company, (the applicant), for the Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station (CPSES), Unit 2, located in Somervell County, Texas.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTIdentification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would amend the construction permit by extending the latest construction completion date from August 1, 1992 to August 1, 1995. The proposed action is in response to Applicant's request dated February 3, 1992, as supplemented by letter dated March 16, 1992.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The Applicant states in its request that the proposed action is needed to complete the construction and preoperational testing for Unit 2. For approximately 32 months, TU Electric redirected its resources principally to Unit 1 in order to complete construction and startup of that Unit. As a result, additional time is now needed to complete the construction of Unit 2.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The environmental impacts associated with construction of the Comanche Peak facility are associated with both units and have been previously evaluated and discussed in the NRC Staff's Final Environmental Statement

(FES), issued in June 1974, which covered the construction of both units. One of the environmental impacts, groundwater withdrawal, is the subject of a construction permit condition and will be discussed further below.

Since the proposed action concerns the extension of the construction permit, the impacts involved are all non-radiological and are associated with continued construction. There are no new significant impacts associated with the proposed action. All activities will take place within the facility, will not result in impacts to previously undisturbed areas, and will not have any significant additional environmental impact. However, there are impacts that would continue during the completion of facility construction.

The FES identified four major environmental impacts due to the construction of both units. Three of the four major environmental construction impacts discussed in the FES have already occurred and are not affected by this proposed action:

- Construction-related activities have disturbed about 400 acres of rangeland and 3,228 acres of land have been used for the construction of Squaw Creek Reservoir.
- The initial set of transmission lines and the additional planned line as discussed in the FES are completed.
- Pipelines have been relocated and the railroad spur and diversion and return lines between Lake Granbury and Squaw Creek Reservoir have been completed.

The fourth major environmental impact addressed in the FES is the community impact which would continue with the extended construction of the facility. The requested extension only involves impacts previously considered, with none of these impacts greater than those previously considered. These impacts flow principally from the prolonged presence of construction workers into the surrounding communities in Hood and Somervell counties. The current work force level of approximately 6650 represent the total on-site work force (i.e., TU Electric and contract personnel supporting Unit 1 and 2 activities). This number represents a decline of 850 from the peak work force on-site at the end of the construction phase of Unit 1, and will continue to decline as the applicant implements its destaffing plan, as Unit 2 construction nears completion. It should be noted that 85 percent of the total work force are contractors and consultants who do not live in the area and, in general, use only temporary quarters during the work week, (i.e., even while they are present there are no extended impacts associated with the arrival of families or services necessary to support permanent residents). In sum, the only community impacts which would accompany this extension would be those which extend the total time the local community is affected by the present demand for public services. As such, the maintenance of the work force level for the additional months requested should not result in significant additional impacts. In addition, it should be noted that only 4500 personnel are associated full time with the Unit 2 Construction Permit extension, and the remainder are required to support the operation of Unit 1 or split their time between Units 1 and 2.

Another impact, the subject of a construction permit condition, is groundwater withdrawal. At the present time, non-potable water for construction activities is being supplied from treated lake water. The construction permit for Comanche Peak Unit 2 includes a condition that the annual average groundwater withdrawal rate not exceed 40 gallons per minute (gpm). The applicant has confirmed that current groundwater withdrawal rates are within the limit established by the construction permit. Thus, continued construction will have no significant impact on groundwater. As background, the NRC Staff's environmental impact appraisal for Amendment 2 of Construction Permit Nos. CPPR-126 and CPPR-127 was based upon a maximum withdrawal of 6.57×10^8 gallons during the construction period of five years at a rate of 250 gpm. For the following reasons the staff's appraisal is still unchanged for the total groundwater to be withdrawn through August 1, 1995. First, from 1975 through December 1986 approximately 4.96×10^8 gallons of groundwater had been withdrawn from the two production wells. From June 1982 through December 1986, 4.52 million ($.045 \times 10^8$) gallons of groundwater had been withdrawn from an additional well, (NOSF well). Second, from January 1987 through February 1992 approximately 64.5 million (0.65×10^8) gallons of groundwater had been withdrawn from the two production wells and the NOSF well. Third, even assuming a maximum groundwater withdrawal of 40 gpm from March 1, 1992 through August 1, 1995, for all groundwater sources (this withdrawal rate is authorized by Amendment 6 to Construction Permits CPPR-126 and CPPR-127), there would be approximately 71.88 million (0.72×10^8) gallons withdrawn. Totaling the above results in a conservative estimate of the total groundwater withdrawal of approximately 6.37×10^8 gallons for the period through

August 1, 1995, which is less than the 6.57×10^8 gallons originally evaluated and authorized by the NRC staff.

As required by the construction permit, environmental monitoring has been conducted.

In the past, a number of groups have identified concerns regarding the potential environmental impacts of several closed landfills at CPSES that contain relatively small amounts of hazardous wastes. Because these landfills are pre-existing conditions, any environmental impacts from the landfills will not be attributable to the extension of the construction completion date for Unit 2. Furthermore, any impacts from the landfills will occur regardless of whether the construction completion date is extended, and an extension will not have any adverse effect on any impacts from the landfills. Therefore, the landfills in question have no relevance to the extension of the construction completion date for Unit 2.

In conclusion, there have been no unreviewed adverse environmental impacts associated with construction and none are anticipated.

Based on its evaluation, the staff has concluded that the calculated impact of continuing to withdraw groundwater at an annual average rate of 40 gpm for the site until August 1, 1995 is negligible and does not result in any significant additional environmental impact. The staff's conclusion is substantiated by groundwater level data collected at the site during construction and periods of large water withdrawal and provided in the Applicant's supplemental letter dated March 16, 1992.

Based on the foregoing, the NRC staff has concluded that the proposed action would have no significant environmental impact. Since this action

would only extend the period of construction activities described in the FES, it does not involve any different impacts or significant changes to those impacts described and analyzed in the original environmental impact statement. Consequently, an environmental impact statement addressing the proposed action is not required.

Alternative to the Proposed Action

The NRC staff has considered that a possible alternative to the proposed action would be for the Commission to deny the request. If this alternative were executed, the Applicant would not be able to complete the construction of the facility, resulting in the denial of benefits to be derived from the production of electric power. This alternative would not eliminate the environmental impacts of construction which have already been incurred. If construction were not completed on CPSES Unit 2 the amount of site redress activities that could be undertaken to restore the area to its natural state would be minimal due to the operation of CPSES Unit 1. This slight environmental benefit would be much outweighed by the economic losses from denial of the use of a facility that is nearly complete. Therefore, the NRC staff has rejected this alternative.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the Final Environmental Statement for the Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

The NRC staff reviewed the Applicant's request and did not consult other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

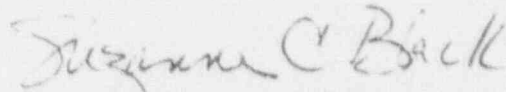
The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for this action.

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, we conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the Applicant's request for extension dated February 3, 1992, as supplemented by letter dated March 16, 1992, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, N. W., Washington, D.C. and at the University of Texas at Arlington Library, Government Publications/Maps, 701 South Cooper, P.O. Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 23rd day of June 1992.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



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