



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

50-219

OFFICE OF THE
ADMINISTRATOR

24 SEP 1973

Mr. L. Manning Muntzing
Director of Regulation
U.S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Mr. Muntzing:

The Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed issuance of a full-term operating license for continuing operation of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station. Our detailed comments are enclosed.

The releases of radioactive liquids and gases from the Oyster Creek plant and subsequent offsite population doses cannot be considered "as low as practicable." While the applicant has indicated that modifications will be made to the waste treatment system, neither the proposed modifications nor the applicant's design basis objectives were discussed in the statement. The final statement should discuss these modifications in detail. Also, the cumulative population dose within 50 miles cannot be considered "as low as practicable." We recommend that the proposed augmented radioactive gas treatment system be installed expeditiously since most of the calculated population dose results from the radiogas release from the plant off-gas system.

We do not believe that historic on-site meteorological data are useful in arriving at accurate dose assessments. An appropriate on-site meteorological program should be initiated as soon as possible.

The studies and information contained in the statement concerning losses of aquatic organisms due to impingement and entrainment are inadequate to determine both absolute losses

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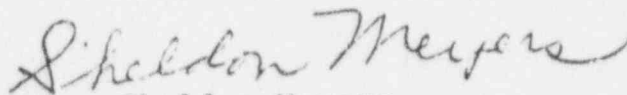
and the effect of these losses on the aquatic ecosystem of Barnegat Bay. The little information that is provided points to an unacceptable level of damage.

In July, EPA performed aerial infrared studies of the Oyster Creek thermal discharge. The results show that the thermal plume affects the entire width of the Bay to the extent that proposed New Jersey water quality standards controlling thermal effects will be violated. This condition can only worsen with the addition of the Forked River unit.

Due to the lack of information concerning the biological effects of the plant's cooling system and the extensive impact of the plant's thermal discharge on Barnegat Bay, we recommend that a full-term operating license not be granted at this time as recommended by the AEC staff. It is our opinion that the plant should continue to operate under its provisional license until biological monitoring programs are completed, the effects of the plant on Barnegat Bay can be assessed, and compliance with proposed New Jersey standards is assured.

In light of our review of this draft statement and in accordance with EPA procedure, we have classified the project as "ER" (Environmental Reservations) and rated the draft statement as "Category 2" (Insufficient Information). We would be pleased to discuss our classification or comments with you or members of your staff.

Sincerely yours,



Sheldon Meyers
Director
Office of Federal Activities

Enclosure