

3500

RELATED CORRESPONDENCE

DOCKET NUMBER 50-445 CPA
PROD. & UTIL. FAC.**CASE**

(CITIZENS ASSN. FOR SOUND ENERGY)

1426 S. Polk
Dallas, Texas

75224

DOCKETED
USNRC

214/946-9446

'87 MAY 19 A11:33

May 9, 1987

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
DOCKETING & SERVICE
BRANCH

Mr. James E. Keppler
Director, Office of Special Cases
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Keppler:

Subject: In the Matter of
Texas Utilities Electric Company, et al.
Application for an Operating License
Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station
Units 1 and 2
Docket No. 50-446

Applicants' Request for Renewal of
Construction Permit No. CPPR-127
for Unit 2

CASE has received Applicants' 4/29/87 letter to the NRC Document Control Desk in which Applicants are seeking an extension of the Construction Permit for Unit 2 of Comanche Peak. Although, in this instance, at least Applicants did not allow their Construction Permit for Unit 2 to actually expire as they did for Unit 1, it is CASE's position that there exist the same significant hazards considerations involved regarding Unit 2 as exist for Unit 1. Therefore, hearings must be held before the NRC Staff takes any action to renew the Construction Permit for Unit 2. We are currently in the process of preparing responses to interrogatories, but we will forward you additional, more detailed comments as soon as possible. In the meantime, we refer you to the various pleadings and rulings by the ASLB (which is constituted of the same members as those who are hearing the CPA case), the Appeal Board, and the Commission, and in particular the Board Order admitting the CPA Contention for Unit 1; CASE believes that the same significant hazards considerations apply for Unit 2 as for Unit 1, and that an identical contention would also be appropriate for Unit 2. (Expedition of the process could, of course, be accomplished by consolidation with the CPA proceedings on Unit 1.)

8706250459 870509
PDR ADOCK 05000446
A PDR

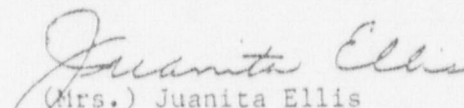
1

MAB

It appears that the NRC Director of the Comanche Peak Division of the Office of Special Projects, Mr. Christopher Grimes, is already becoming aware of some of the problems encountered in the design, construction, and QA/QC of Comanche Peak through the years (see attached article from the 5/6/87 FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM). CASE is hopeful that the new Office of Special Cases will begin immediately to recognize and deal with the severe problems at Comanche Peak in a manner which is more appropriate and fitting for a regulatory body than has been the case regarding Comanche Peak for many years.

Sincerely,

CASE (Citizens Association for Sound
Energy)


(Mrs.) Juanita Ellis
President

cc: Service List -- mailed May 11, 1987

Attachment

LOCAL STATE

Star-Telegram

Wednesday, May 6, 1987

Section A, Page 15

Plant should have been stopped, official says

By GAYLE REAVES
Star-Telegram Writer

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission probably should have ordered work halted at Comanche Peak nuclear power plant three years ago, says a commission official overseeing the troubled plant.

Christopher Grimes, director of the Comanche Peak division of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Office of Special Projects, said a stop-work order is not being considered because "the momentum has gotten to the point that it would probably do more damage."

But Grimes said the commission is asking TU Electric Co., builder and primary owner of the \$7.7 billion plant, for detailed information explaining all of its rework and reinspection programs at the plant

near Glen Rose, about 45 miles southwest of Fort Worth.

Grimes said it is uncertain whether the vast effort to repair, replace and retest plant components — costing hundreds of millions of dollars — is being conducted in compliance with regulatory requirements.

It hasn't been proven whether the work is being done to required standards, Grimes said. Before the commission can judge that, he said, "We need to understand those programs better."

The Office of Special Projects was created earlier this year to take over all aspects of regulating Comanche Peak construction. Serious questions have been raised

about the adequacy of the commission's past regulation of the plant.

The agency's own investigators documented harassment and intimidation of inspectors who tried to point out problems at the plant.

Grimes' comments came in response to questions about an April 27 letter to the commission from Comanche Peak opponents charging that the rework efforts do not comply with regulatory standards and are being done without commission supervision.

The letter, from Billie Garde, attorney for Citizens Association for Sound Energy, asked the commission to find answers to questions about the various rework pro-

Comanche Peak overseer wants details of rework plans

grams and how they are being conducted.

Grimes said the regulatory commission does not agree with all of Garde's allegations, but it does want answers to the same questions.

He said the agency is drafting a letter formally asking for detailed explanations of the programs' intricacies and of how the programs relate to the various questions that have been raised about the plant. The utility will be asked to deliver responses by the end of May, he said.

Garde said the utility is trying to wipe the slate clean of the plant's past problems and inadequacies — "to erase everything and start all over again" — without admitting that is what is being done.

Comanche Peak, originally budgeted at \$779 million, is now nine years behind schedule and expected to cost at least \$7.7 billion. Its owners twice have failed to convince the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the plant is safe enough to be allowed to operate.

In 1984, the utility asked for a suspension of hearings on the operating license and began the huge reinspection and rework effort known as the Comanche Peak Response Team.

But by last fall, the utility had found such extensive problems with the plant's design that it began a separate effort to examine and correct design problems at the plant.

And it junked part of its original rework plans and replaced them with something

Please see Plant on Page 16

Plant overseer wants rework plans

Continued from Page 15
else, called "corrective action plans," to fix problems found in all areas of the plant.

Dick Ramsey, spokesman for the utility, said the corrective action and design rework programs meet all commission standards.

"Obviously, this whole effort is a recognition that additional assurance (of the plant's safety) has got to be provided," he said.

"When we get through, we're going to have a high level of assur-

ance of safety. I think the highest level of assurance any nuclear plant has ever had."

TU Electric was predicting as late as last month that licensing hearings would start again by June. But Ramsey said Tuesday that the utility has no idea when hearings will resume.

James Keppler, director of the commission's special projects office, said it would have been better if, at the beginning of the rework program, a plan of action had been approved.

"In some ways, the project is being handled differently than I would have done it," he said, adding that he has not been "totally happy" with how the commission has overseen work in the past. But he said it would be unwise to try to change its course dramatically now.

TU Electric won't specify the costs of its rework and reinspection efforts at Comanche Peak beyond an estimate given last fall that it would be in the "hundreds of millions." The program has been expanded significantly since then.