



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 6, 2021

**VIA EMAIL ONLY**

Wenonah G. Haire  
Tribal Historic Preservation Office  
Catawba Indian Nation  
1536 Tom Steven Road  
Rock Hill, SC 29730  
[wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com](mailto:wenonahh@ccppcrafts.com)

**SUBJECT:** NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL OF THE COLUMBIA FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY IN HOPKINS, SOUTH CAROLINA. (DOCKET NUMBER: 70-1151)

Dear Ms. Haire:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has published a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Westinghouse Electric Company, LLC's (WEC) request to renew its operating license for the Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility (CFFF) in Hopkins, South Carolina, for an additional 40 years. The DEIS provides the NRC staff's evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed license renewal, including analyses of potential impacts to historic properties. The NRC staff has prepared the DEIS in accordance with NRC's regulations at Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 51, "Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions" (10 CFR 51), which implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In accordance with 36 CFR 800.8, the NRC staff is coordinating its National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review with its NEPA environmental review.

In its license renewal application, the WEC did not request changes to its licensed operations or construction of buildings and structures that would result in significant land disturbances. The WEC has established site-wide procedures (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System [ADAMS] [Accession No. ML21144A117](#)) with the goal of avoiding and minimizing impacts on historic and cultural resources in the conduct of all ground-disturbing activities including those being conducted as part of the implementation of the Consent Agreement (CA) executed with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. The procedures direct personnel to conduct ground-penetrating radar or another applicable alternative method to identify potential subsurface cultural resource anomalies prior to starting any work in undisturbed areas of the CFFF site. The procedures also include stop work procedures and notification to the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in the event of an unanticipated discovery of cultural resources or human remains. Additionally, the procedures require that a qualified professional archaeologist investigate any finds to determine the potential significance of the find and consult with the South Carolina SHPO on additional actions, which may include further archaeological investigations or consultation with Indian Tribes.

Additionally, the WEC has proposed to conduct a cultural resource survey within the CFFF site to identify historic properties in a manner that would further avoid or minimize potential impacts. A qualified professional would perform the survey. The WEC is coordinating the survey with the South Carolina SHPO.

Based on its review (see Section 3.9 of the DEIS) and in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1), the NRC staff is confirming its effects determination that the proposed renewal of the WEC's license to continue to operate the CFFF for an additional 40 years would not affect historic properties.

### Background

The NRC staff began its NEPA environmental and Section 106 reviews in 2015 and requested concurrence from the Catawba Indian Nation on its determination that no historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) would be affected by the undertaking because the WEC did not request changes to its currently licensed operations or construction of new buildings or structures. In October 2019, the NRC staff prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed license renewal. During the preparation of this draft EA, the NRC staff continued its outreach to the Catawba Indian Nation. The NRC staff explained that the WEC would be conducting further investigation into onsite water and soil contamination under a CA, which require the installation of groundwater monitoring wells and sediment sampling in disturbed and previously undisturbed areas of the CFFF site. Installation of the new groundwater wells and sediment sampling would be short-term and involve minimal land disturbance. During installation of the wells, the WEC's contractor would follow established procedures addressing inadvertent discoveries of cultural resources and use ground-penetrating radar prior to conducting ground-disturbing activities. In November 2019, the Catawba Indian Nation provided comments to the NRC staff indicating no "immediate concerns with regard to traditional cultural properties, sacred sites or Native American archaeological sites within the boundaries of the proposed project areas," and requesting that the Tribe "be notified if Native American artifacts and/or human remains are located during the ground disturbance phase of the project."

On July 31, 2020, the NRC staff notified the Catawba Indian Nation of the NRC's intent to prepare an EIS and invited comments during the scoping process. The Catawba Indian Nation expressed its desired to be consulted.

### Preparation of the DEIS

In preparing the DEIS, the NRC staff reviewed information provided by the South Carolina SHPO, the Catawba Indian Nation, and other external stakeholders during the (i) public comment period for the October 2019 draft EA and (ii) 2020 EIS scoping public comment period. The NRC staff also consulted cultural resource reports and historic context information available at the South Carolina Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. Additionally, in response to NRC's requests for additional information, the WEC provided additional information on December 18, 2020 ([ADAMS Accession No. ML20353A275](#)), March 10, 2021 ([ADAMS Accession No. ML21097A170](#)), May 10, 2021 ([ADAMS Accession No. ML21144A117](#)), and July 1, 2021 ([ADAMS Accession No. ML21194A149](#)) about the evaluation of impacts on historic and cultural resources.

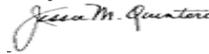
The DEIS is publicly accessible from the NRC's ADAMS using ADAMS accession number ML21209A213. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Additionally, the DEIS can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2120/ML21209A213.pdf>, and from the NRC webpage for the WEC's CFFF at <https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/fc/westinghouse-fuel-fab-fac-sc-lc.html>.

The DEIS is available for a 45-day public comment period, which opened with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Notice of Availability published in the *Federal Register* on August 6, 2021 (86 FR 43236). The NRC's notice providing instructions on how to submit comments also appeared in the August 6, 2021, *Federal Register* (86 FR 43276). The NRC staff also plans to conduct a virtual public meeting on August 26 to receive comments on the DEIS. The meeting information is available in the NRC's *Federal Register* Notice.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Diana Diaz-Toro by telephone at 301-415-0930 or e-mail at [Diana.Diaz-Toro@nrc.gov](mailto:Diana.Diaz-Toro@nrc.gov).

In accordance with 10 CFR Section 2.390, "Public inspections, exemptions, requests for withholding," of the NRC's "Agency Rules of Practice and Procedure," a copy of this communication will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, or from the NRC's ADAMS. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

Sincerely,



Signed by Quintero, Jessie  
on 08/06/21

Jessie M. Quintero, Chief  
Environmental Review Branch  
Division of Rulemaking, Environmental,  
and Financial Support  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

Docket No.: 70-1151  
License No.: SNM-1107

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