

Diaz Toro, Diana

From: Diaz Toro, Diana
Sent: Friday, August 06, 2021 1:49 PM
To: noah.silverman@noaa.gov; nmfs.ser.esa.consultations@noaa.gov
Cc: Arlene, Briana
Subject: Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS for the License Renewal of the Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility for Public Comment and Section 7 ESA - SER-2017-18839

Good afternoon,

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has published for public comment the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Westinghouse Electric Company, LLC's (WEC) request to renew its operating license for the Columbia Fuel Fabrication Facility (CFFF) for an additional 40 years. The DEIS is publicly available from the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/readingrm/adams.html>. The ADAMS accession number for the DEIS is ML21209A213. The DEIS is also accessible 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 45-day comment period opened with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Notice of Availability for the DEIS that was 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 43277). The NRC staff 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.

The NRC staff requested informal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2017 with the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) during the development of an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. The NRC staff originally focused its impact evaluation on the shortnose sturgeon because they are the only ESA federally listed species under the purview of NMFS known to occur in the action area (i.e., the Congaree River). During discussions, NMFS recommended that the NRC consider impacts on the Atlantic sturgeon because they could recolonize the area in the future if fish passages are added to downriver dams that impede their migration. Following its review of the NRC staff's biological evaluation, NMFS concurred with the NRC staff's determination that the proposed 40-year license renewal is not likely to adversely affect the shortnose sturgeon or Atlantic sturgeon. Additionally, NMFS re-concurred with its may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect determination during the preparation of the NRC's October 2019 draft EA.

On July 31, 2020, the NRC notified the NMFS of the NRC staff's intent to prepare an EIS. During the development of this DEIS, the NRC staff determined that no new information would call into question the staff's previous findings for shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon, therefore, reinitiation of consultation with NMFS is not required.

Should you have any questions concerning the staff's environmental review of the WEC's license renewal application, please contact me at 301-415-0930 or via e-mail at Diana.Diaz-Toro@nrc.gov.

Thank you and have a nice weekend.
Diana

Diana Diaz-Toro
Project Manager
NMSS/REFS/ERMB

301-415-0930

diana.diaz-toro@nrc.gov