

ENERGY NORTHWEST

P.O. Box 968 ■ Richland, Washington 99352-0968

November 27, 2001
GO1-01-0100

Docket No. 50-460

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

Gentlemen:

Subject: **ENERGY NORTHWEST NUCLEAR PROJECT NO. 1 (WNP-1)
REPLY TO REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
EXTENSION OF CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION DATE**

Reference: Letter, dated June 22, 2001, JM Sebrosky (NRC) to JV Parrish (Energy Northwest), "Request for Additional Information for the Review of Energy Northwest Nuclear Project No. 1 (WNP-1) Request to Extend the Construction Completion Date (TAC NO. MB1804)"

In the reference, the staff requested that additional information be provided to support review of our request to extend the completion date for the construction of WNP-1. The requested information is attached.

Should you have any questions or desire additional information pertaining to this letter, please call WA Kiel at (509) 377-4490.

Respectfully,



DW Coleman, Manager
Performance Assessment & Regulatory Affairs
Mail Drop PE20

Attachment

cc: EW Merschoff - NRC RIV
JS Cushing - NRC NRR
MM Mendonca - NRC NRR
JM Sebrosky - NRC NRR

NRC Sr. Resident Inspector - 988C
JO Luce - EFSEC
TC Poindexter - Winston & Strawn
DL Williams - BPA -1399

ADD1

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- Question 1 The March 1975 Final Environmental Statement (FES) for the construction of WNP-1 discussed two historic properties and two archaeological sites near the facility. During the intervening period, have any additional archaeological sites in the area been identified that may be potentially impacted by the resumption of construction at WNP-1; have such sites been listed or are they eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places? Have all excavation activities been completed in the vicinity of the Columbia River near the two archaeological sites? If not, what actions will be taken to ensure that the interests of the Washington State Historic Preservation Office are preserved during excavation activities?

Response

No additional historic or culturally significant sites have been identified in areas that might be affected by the resumption of construction activities. All construction activities in the vicinity of the Columbia River that required excavation and earthmoving were completed prior to the suspension of construction in 1983.

- Question 2 If construction of WNP-1 is to be resumed, then what construction-related activities remain that may disturb previously undisturbed land or other natural resources? For example, are there access roads, transmission lines, buildings facilities, etc., left to be completed and do such activities differ from those previously evaluated? Would there be any dredging, excavation or other disturbance of the Columbia River bed related to completion construction of WNP-1?

Response

Resumption of construction of WNP-1 would not require disturbance of any land that had not already been disturbed prior to the cessation of construction in 1983. No disturbance of the riverbed or shoreline would be required by the resumption of construction.

- Question 3 Does the projected construction workforce of 1900 persons remain bounding should WNP-1 construction be resumed? Since issuance of the construction permit, have there been changes to the demographics of the region that may lead to significant socioeconomic impacts different from those previously evaluated in the 1975 FES; for example, demands on the local schools, hospitals, public facilities, utilities (e.g., water use), transportation infrastructure, construction worker shortages, etc.?

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Response

Should construction be resumed, the direct craft workforce would peak at approximately 2,200 persons for a brief period of time (e.g., one month or so). With regard to regional demographics, the Tri-Cities community has changed considerably since 1975. The combined population of Benton and Franklin Counties has grown from 102,000 in 1975 to 192,000 in 2000 and the public infrastructure has grown as well. This growth has occurred across such sectors as agriculture, retail, commercial, and government, most notably, the waste disposal and restoration activities at Hanford and Umatilla, Oregon. Compared to 1975, the estimated socioeconomic impacts of WNP-1 construction would be the same or less.

Question 4 Are there any projects or activities occurring or planned for the area that may lead to additional cumulative impacts to the surrounding population or to the natural environment?

Response

Energy Northwest has no plans for other activities that could contribute to additional cumulative impacts. The U.S. Department of Energy has plans to construct a waste vitrification plant on the Hanford Site to process radioactive wastes presently stored in tanks. Completion of the construction of this large project is currently scheduled for 2007. No cumulative impact to the natural environment is anticipated if both construction of WNP-1 and the vitrification plant were pursued concurrently. However, it is possible that there would be an incremental stress on the local infrastructure.

Question 5 Appendices B and C of the 1975 FES list terrestrial and aquatic biota expected to occur in the environs of the WNP-1 and WNP-4 sites. Since the FES was issued, several plant and animal species in Appendices B and C have been listed as threatened or endangered by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Table 1 provides a list of species identified in the 1975 FES that have been listed as threatened or endangered by the FWS. Table 2 contains listed species that may occur in Benton and Franklin Counties. There are two fish species listed in Table 2 that had not been previously identified as occurring near the plant, the bull trout and steelhead. Are either of these known to be present in the plant environs? Are there any known potential adverse impacts to any listed or candidate species including those species listed in Table 1 or 2 that may result from the resumption of construction at WNP-1?

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Table 1		
Common Name	Species	Classification
Bald Eagle	Bird	Threatened
Canada Goose	Bird	Threatened
Sockeye or Blue Back Salmon	Fish	Endangered/ Threatened
Coho or Silver Salmon	Fish	Endangered
Chinook Salmon	Fish	Threatened
White Sturgeon	Fish	Endangered
Cutthroat Trout	Fish	Threatened
Pacific Lamprey	Fish	NA
Threespine Stickleback	Fish	Endangered

Table 2		
County	Common Name	Group
Benton	Trout, Bull	Fish
	Steelhead (Upper Columbia River Population)	Fish
	Steelhead (Snake River Population)	Fish
	Steelhead (Middle Columbia River Population)	Fish
	Salmon, Sockeye (Snake River Population)	Fish
	Salmon, Chinook (Upper Columbia River Spring)	Fish
	Salmon, Chinook (Snake River Spring/Summer)	Fish
	Salmon, Chinook (Snake River Fall Run)	Fish
	Eagle, Bald	Bird
Franklin	Trout, Bull	Fish
	Steelhead (Upper Columbia River Population)	Fish
	Steelhead (Snake River Population)	Fish
	Steelhead (Middle Columbia River Population)	Fish
	Salmon, Sockeye (Snake River Population)	Fish
	Salmon, Chinook (Upper Columbia River Spring)	Fish
	Salmon, Chinook (Snake River Fall Run)	Fish
	Salmon, Chinook (Snake River Spring/Summer)	Fish
	Eagle, Bald	Bird

Response

Of the species listed in Table 2 above, the Upper Columbia River spring chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and Upper Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) are present in the vicinity of the WNP-1 site. Spring chinook do not spawn in the Hanford Reach but do migrate through the area as adults bound for upriver spawning grounds (April to mid-June) and as outmigrating juveniles (April to September). Steelhead can be present in the reach year-round. This is because there is substantial spawning habitat in the reach and juveniles can spend one to three years in freshwater before migrating to the ocean. (DOE/RL-2000-27, April 2000.)

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Although the entire population of Columbia River bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) is listed, it has not been identified, either as a resident or as a migrant, in the area of WNP-1. The fish exists in relatively widespread subpopulations throughout the river basin. A majority of Columbia River bull trout occur in isolated, fragmented habitats that support low numbers of fish. The few remaining bull trout "strongholds" in the Columbia River basin tend to be found in large areas of contiguous habitats in the Snake River basin of central Idaho mountains, upper Clark Fork and Flathead Rivers in Montana, and several streams in the Blue Mountains in Washington and Oregon. (Fed Reg, V. 63, P. 31647, June 10, 1998.)

Resumption of construction activities at WNP-1 would not be expected to cause adverse impacts to any listed aquatic or terrestrial species or their habitats. In-river construction work and all significant earthmoving activities have been completed. Experience at the neighboring Columbia Generating Station (having the same intake and outfall design) suggests that water withdrawals and discharges during construction and operation will not harm aquatic species.

Question 6 During the June 14, 2001 phone call with the NRC staff, Energy Northwest discussed a recent Presidential Action to create a National Monument in the area near the WNP-1 construction site. Please provide details regarding the boundaries of this National Monument. Include a description of any areas of the National Monument that border the WNP-1 construction site and the boundaries of the National Monument as they relate to the construction of the 500 KV transmission line to the Ashe substation and any other transmission lines that are in service or will be constructed to support WNP-1.

Response

The Hanford Reach National Monument was designated by presidential proclamation on June 9, 2000 (Fed Reg, V. 65, P. 37253, June 13, 2000). The Hanford Reach is the 51-mile stretch of the Columbia River above the city of Richland, Washington. The monument generally includes a ¼-mile corridor along the river in the vicinity of the WNP-1 site. In addition to the river corridor, the monument designation includes about 305 square miles that nearly circumscribe central Hanford. The areas leased by Energy Northwest for intake structures for WNP-1 and Columbia Generating Station are included in the monument.

The WNP-1 site is approximately 2.5 miles west of the Columbia River at River Mile 352. Construction activities at WNP-1 would not occur on or near the monument. However, there would be typical maintenance-type activities within the WNP-1 makeup water pumphouse area. The existing 230 KV line from the Ashe substation is not within or near the monument boundary. The 500 KV transmission line to the Ashe substation, when constructed, would traverse approximately two miles across the WNP-1 site and would not be within or near the monument boundary.