

November 26, 2003

Dr. Roy Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE AREA UNDER
EVALUATION FOR THE JOSEPH M. FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE
RENEWAL

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by Southern Nuclear Operating Company, Inc. (SNC) for the renewal of the operating licenses for Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Units 1 and 2 (FNP). FNP is located in Houston County, Alabama, on the west bank of the Chattahoochee River. As part of the review of the license renewal application, the NRC is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) under the provision of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, which includes an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended.

SNC contacted your office on May 7, 2002 (Enclosure 1), and your office responded by the enclosed letter dated June 21, 2002 (Enclosure 2), identifying the presence of the Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) within the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river system. The NRC has contacted the FWS and requested a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of FNP and its associated transmission lines from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The NRC also requests that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provide a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of FNP and its associated transmission lines.

In your June 21, 2002, letter, you stated that Section 7 consultation regarding the Gulf sturgeon would likely fall within the purview of FWS. The NRC requests that you confirm to us if the NMFS would be involved in any Section 7 consultation on the Gulf sturgeon.

The proposed action would include use and continued maintenance of existing plant facilities and transmission lines and would not result in new construction or disturbance. Any maintenance activities would be limited to previously disturbed areas. In total, for the specific purpose of connecting FNP to the regional transmission system, there are 473 kilometers (km) or 293.5 miles (mi) of corridor that occupy approximately 2,167 hectares (ha) or 5,335 acres (ac) of land. In Alabama, the transmission lines traverse the counties of Houston, Montgomery,

Henry, Geneva, Dale, Pike, and Barbour counties. In Georgia, the lines cross Early, Baker, Mitchell, Tift, Worth, Miller, Seminole, and Decatur counties. In Florida, the lines traverse Jackson county. Two figures are enclosed which show the site boundary and transmission lines (Enclosure 3).

FNP-Webb Line: This line is 17 km (10.5 mi) long with a right-of-way (ROW) width of 38 meters (m) or 125 feet (ft) and it occupies 64 ha (159 ac). This line lies entirely in Alabama.

FNP-Pinckard Line: This line is 50 km (31 mi) long with a ROW width of 38 m (125 ft) and occupies 190 ha (469 ac). This line occurs entirely in Alabama.

FNP-South Bainbridge Line: This line shares the ROW with the Farley-Raccoon Creek line for approximately the first 11 km (7 mi) of the ROW from the FNP site. The line is 74 km (46 mi) long with a ROW width of 38 m (125 ft) and occupies 282 ha (697 ac). This line crosses into Georgia from Alabama.

FNP-Raccoon Creek Line: This line shares the ROW with the Farley-S. Bainbridge line; specifically it shares the first 11 km (7 mi) of this ROW. The line is 100 km (62 mi) long with a ROW width of 46 m (150 ft) and occupies 456 ha (1,127 ac). This line also crosses into Georgia from Alabama.

FNP-Sinai Cemetery Line: This line is approximately 77 km (96 mi) long with a ROW width of 38 m (125 ft) and it occupies 236 ha (582 ac). This line crosses into Florida from Alabama.

The plant uses a closed-cycle cooling system with six mechanical draft cooling towers (i.e., each unit has three 14-cell cooling towers). The plant draws from and discharges to the Chattahoochee River to remove waste heat from the facility. River water is drawn through a canal that is perpendicular to river flow, to a storage pond, and then into the cooling towers. The heated water is discharged back to the Chattahoochee River through a single pipe, approximately 530 m (1,740 ft) downstream of the intake structure. The plant also uses both surface and groundwater to meet its water supply needs. Groundwater is used for potable, make-up, and fire-protection systems.

On January 7, 2004, the NRC plans to conduct a site audit. In addition, we plan to hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on January 8, 2004, at the Quality Inn, 3053 Ross Clark Circle, Dothan, Alabama 36301. Your staff is invited to attend both the site audit and the public meetings. Additional information on these activities will be forwarded to Mr. David Bernhart. The NRC staff will forward to your office a copy of the draft SEIS along with a request for comments. The anticipated publication date for the draft SEIS is August 2004.

R. Crabtree

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If you have any questions concerning FNP, the license renewal application, or other aspects of this project, please contact Mr. Jack Cushing, Environmental Project Manager, at (301) 415-1424 or by e-mail at JXC9@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos.: 50-348, 50-364

Enclosures: As stated

cc w/encl.: See next page

R. Crabtree

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Accession Nos

1. Ltr. to R. Crabtree w/Svc. List: **ML033370721**
2. Ltr. from Southern Co. Dated May 7, 2002 w/Map (**Encl. 1**); Ltr. from U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Dated: June 21, 2002, (**Encl. 2**); Joseph M. Farley Plant- Figure 3-1 Site Boundary Map and Figure 3-2 Transmission Line Map (**Encl. 3**): **ML033360439**
3. Pkg: **ML033370741**

*See previous concurrence

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OFFICE	LA:RLEP	GS:RLEP	PM:RLEP	SC:RLEP	OGC	PD:RLEP
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OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant

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