



August 15, 2006

Chief, Rules and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration, Mailstop T-6D59
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

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Dear Sir/Madam:

I am speaking this evening to register the support of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce for Dominion's early site permit (ESP) application for the North Anna Power Station site, and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff's preliminary recommendation that the ESP should be issued [*Federal Register*, July 12, 2006, Volume 71, Number 133, page 39372-39373].

The Virginia Chamber of Commerce is Virginia's largest and most diverse business organization. Its membership includes Fortune 500 firms that do business worldwide to small family firms doing business right here in Louisa County.

Nuclear energy is extremely important to the citizens and businesses in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Dominion's nuclear stations in Virginia have provided and continue to provide a significant portion (34 percent) of the electricity used in the state. The low cost energy produced from these generating facilities has enhanced the state's economic climate and enabled Virginia to attract new business growth. Existing companies have also benefited from a lower cost energy environment that has allowed them to remain competitive and expand operations in the Commonwealth.

Dominion is among the very top nuclear operators in the country. The North Anna Power Station is one of the nation's most efficient nuclear generation facilities. The lack of affordable, reliable energy in other parts of the U.S. has already had a negative impact on the economies of those areas. Because more baseload electricity will be required in the future, it is important that nuclear energy remains an option to meet this growing demand. Virginia businesses must have access to reliable, low cost energy if they are to remain competitive in a global marketplace.

The construction and operation of an additional unit at North Anna would also result in significant economic benefits for the region and for the Commonwealth. Dominion estimates that 700 permanent employees will be required to operate the new facility. These are high paying jobs with annual salaries over twice the average salary level in the region. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) estimates that 1,500 additional jobs would be created due to economic activity associated with the plant. The permanent workforce and a construction workforce

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estimated at 2,000 will provide significant opportunities for local, regional and state businesses to grow and prosper. Additionally, the direct and indirect tax revenues generated by the project will provide over \$70 million per year to local and state coffers as estimated by VEDP. This will provide much needed funding for schools and other critical infrastructure.

Dominion's nuclear facilities have an excellent safety record. North Anna Power Station has been recognized by the NRC, the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, and the World Association of Nuclear Operators as a top performing nuclear station in the areas of safety and efficiency.

Dominion also is an excellent environmental steward and has demonstrated that it is a good neighbor by agreeing to spend \$200 million on a cooling tower system to cool a potential third reactor at the North Anna site. Dominion made this commitment to satisfy concerns expressed by state regulatory agencies and local citizens about the potential thermal impacts on Lake Anna and the Waste Heat Treatment Facility from using the lake for once-through cooling.

The NRC staff has performed a rigorous review of the potential environmental impacts associated with operation of additional reactors at the North Anna site. The Virginia Chamber commends the agency staff for its meticulous review of Dominion's ESP application and supports its conclusions contained in the supplemental draft environmental impact statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith D. Chatham', with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

Keith D. Chatham
Vice President – Government Affairs