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OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

Comments submitted to the public hearing
Before the Tribunal of the NRC
Re: Early Site Permitting process for building up to two new nuclear power
plants in Port Gibson, MS.

My name is Karen Wimpelberg. I live at 27 Fontainebleau Dr. in New Orleans, Louisiana. I am one of the founders and the current Board President of the Alliance for Affordable Energy (AAE). Founded in 1985, the Alliance is an educational, public interest, non-profit membership organization dedicated to creating a fair, affordable, and environmentally-responsible energy policy for our state and nation.

I wish to thank profusely Public Citizen, NIRS, the Sierra Club of Mississippi and the many advocates from Mississippi and Louisiana who have been intrepid and persistent in their work on the issue of whether Entergy Inc. should be granted an Early Site Permit. We were not able to intervene in this round due to the untimely death of our Executive Director right at the time of the 30-day "window of opportunity" to do so.

The Alliance (AAE) has a long history of involvement with the Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Plant. With the leadership of the late, Gary Groesch, one of our founders and our executive director for 16 years, we intervened in the rate cases involved with the original building of nuclear power plants on this site. Through our interventions and lawsuits we, and the press, calculate we have saved ratepayers of New Orleans alone, at least \$1 billion dollars that would have been charged to them since 1985. Our lawsuit establishing the imprudent costs associated with the building of the existing power plant here resulted in a finding of \$465 million dollars on behalf of ratepayers. The processes for public review and input at that time were more accessible for the ratepayers and taxpayers who would actually bear the economic burden, more accessible for the intervenors who would try to evaluate and weigh the costs and benefits, and more accessible for the press which would report the debates. In other words, though the obstacles were many, the process was ultimately more 'transparent' and therefore more democratic. But that has drastically changed.

So, even though our office and much of our archives were lost to Katrina and Rita, I have driven 4 hours today, on the eve of the 1st anniversary of Hurricane Katrina for this rare public hearing date, a time when all local press are focusing on how little real leadership, support and empathy has emerged in the effort to address the worst natural disaster to ever hit the United States - what that means for the future of our nation, the earth and, of course, New Orleans.

But today is also my birthday. And while I would, for emotional and psychological reasons, like to be in New Orleans and attend some of the evaluating, remembering and honoring events, I choose to be here commenting on what is a very strong push by our national leaders - a \$250 million dollar subsidized push - to force us to pay for another enormous, economic boondoggle (as the cover of Forbes magazine called Grand Gulf I more than 15 years ago). As a personal comment, I choose to be here for the future of my country, my state and beloved city of New Orleans, but also for my children, Alex, his wife Ashley, Anna and my two, so far, grandchildren, Ella and

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Davis. Their future is at stake – less so at this time because they are not poor and are white – but at stake just the same. Their safety, their economic future and their quality of life are innately tied to how and whether our government and society choose to view, protect and provide opportunities for all of its citizens. With all that said, we believe the Alliance has standing to comment on this issue.

1. We wish to register our strong opposition to the new licensing process and the reviews that have emerged from it thus far.
2. The NRC should, at least, change from 20 years to 5 the amount of time it considers these environmental issues to be resolved.
 - a) Too many EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) analyses have been arbitrarily deferred to the COL (Combined Construction and Operation License) stage. What if a significant change should occur in those 20 years – such as, say, a terrible hurricane which causes over 250,000 people, or 110,000 ratepayers to simply disappear from the ranks of Entergy's customer base – and therefore, its projected 'income'? These are current statistics only from its N.O. subsidiary. I do not have the figures for Mississippi, Louisiana or Texas.
 - b) This early stage process (may I remind you that Entergy Inc. has been given \$250 million dollars of taxpayer monies just to go through this stage) does not have room to account for emergencies - such as Hurricanes and Katrina and Rita. However, the utilities have been promised \$2 billion of taxpayer monies in "risk insurance" to pay for delays in construction should they be allowed to move to that stage. Now, one of their subsidiaries has been nearly annihilated by a storm and because of SEC (Security and Exchange Commission) rules, in place to protect shareholders, not ratepayers, Entergy can only "lend", at a reasonable interest rate, up to \$200 million dollars to it for its restoration. Would the NRC expect any remaining ratepayers to bear the burden of the costs of any new billion dollar nuclear power plants they approved should there be another such disaster? We know all too well that the answer is 'yes'. Since the present ESP (Early Site Permit) set a 20 year moratorium on reevaluating any environmental impact issues. We in N.O. are experiencing that now. The increased economic burden will surely send more ratepayers flying to other service areas which require their utilities to weigh all the costs before they can raise the rates.
 - c) Did any members of the NRC, the Presidential administration and Congress support Entergy's and Entergy N.O.'s urgent plea for financial support to restore the N.O. utility infrastructure? Congress and the President did help 'bail out' Con Ed, after all, much less of a disaster to the utility and the city itself though about twice the number of deaths as N.O. Did the NRC admonish the SEC to relax rules for how much the holding company could 'help' one of its subsidiaries in such dire circumstances? Would they if it were an unnatural disaster such as a short in the electrical systems, which might be caused by bad weather or a terrorist act, ultimately forcing the closure of those power plants? Could we ever know? No – that process is not transparent and neither is the EIS review process.

3. However, the Alliance wishes to oppose the new licensing process particularly on the issue that it inappropriately ignores the justification for the power plant additions in this early stage of the process.
- a. Would the NRC grant \$250,000 dollars (one tenth of what has been granted Entergy to simply apply) to any (or all as a consortium) of these groups? Alliance to Save Energy (ASE), the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) Public Citizen, Nuclear Information and Resource Society (NIRS), the International Energy Agency (IEA) and/or the U.S. Coalition for Sustainable Energy to do a real study and review of the alternatives to building more nuclear power plants? If you truly believe in public input, you would grant this.
 - b. In a joint Scientific American article, 15 years ago, the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and Amory Lovins' Rocky Mountain Institute found that it would be cheaper to save 39 to 59 percent of all the electricity used in the U.S. than pay to run coal fired or nuclear power plants and deliver that same power to customers. Saving electricity is extremely lucrative, says Amory Lovins, but because electricity is the most heavily subsidized form of energy and other reasons, the U.S. has been slow to do it. For the citizens of Port Gibson, who understandably want this plant to expand so that they can grow their town, we implore you to look into the tremendous economic boosts available to you if you switch to producing the vast types of technologies already developed for saving electricity.

4. Nuclear waste and security risks have not been adequately addressed in the new licensing process. This is a fatal and economically disastrous 'glossing over' of the facts that exist around this part of the issue.

- a) Entergy, as all other nuclear power proponents is touting the fact that nuclear power does not contribute to global warming – a dire climate change condition that has been brought about by human activity in its pursuit of evermore energy consumption without accompanying investment in technologies to meet those needs. As a result, little effort has been made to also provide for more stewardship of this earth and its natural resources. Since 1995, the Alliance for Affordable Energy has been researching, then educating the public and elected officials about the dangers and opportunities related to global warming.
- b) Transporting, and burying radioactive waste, mining and enriching more uranium in order to build more nuclear power plants thus allowing for more proliferation of nuclear materials used to build nuclear weapons bring radioactive contamination and risks to public health and safety. These are not opportunities to address global warming. They are, instead, real dangers. We will not be swayed by the 'helps global warming' argument in favor of building more nuclear power plants.

C.

In conclusion, the Alliance for Affordable Energy stands ready to help all parties, including ourselves, to reach a better understanding of what it means to bring about affordable energy for this country and the world.

It is historically the case that from permitting to generation on line takes approximately 10 years. In 10 years, if this country does not reduce its emissions & contributions of CO₂ by at least 50% to 70%, it will be too late to mitigate the effects of global warming in our children's and grandchildren's lifetimes.