

October 30, 2006

Milford Wayne Donaldson
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
California Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS REGARDING CULTURAL AND HISTORIC
RESOURCES FOR THE RANCHO SECO NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION
LICENSE TERMINATION PLAN (TAC No. L52668)

Dear Mr. Donaldson:

As required by 36 CFR 800.4(a), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is requesting the views of the California Office of Historic Preservation regarding potential impacts to cultural and historical resources as a result of the NRC's proposed action; i.e., license termination for the Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station (Rancho Seco). This letter is a follow-up to the phone conversation on October 5, 2006, between Mike McGurt of your office and Neil Haggerty of the NRC's environmental review staff. As discussed, the NRC is considering the Sacramento Municipal Utility District's (the District) license amendment request for termination of the Rancho Seco Operating License. The licensee (i.e., the District), in accordance with NRC decommissioning regulations, has submitted a License Termination Plan (LTP) for NRC approval. The LTP is currently being reviewed by NRC staff in order to assure compliance with NRC's environmental health and safety regulations. In accordance with the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 51.21, the NRC staff is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) of the effects of the proposed action; i.e., NRC issuing a license amendment that approves the LTP. The proposed license amendment to terminate the Rancho Seco license would not authorize additional plant activities beyond those that are already authorized. The major NRC action associated with approval of the LTP is a determination of the adequacy of the final radiation survey; therefore, this action is administrative.

The Rancho Seco site is located in the southeast part of Sacramento County, California, approximately 42 kilometers (26 miles) north-northeast of Stockton and 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Sacramento. Within the 1,004-hectare (2,480-acre) owner-controlled area is a 35-hectare (87-acre) fence-enclosed "Industrial Area" containing the nuclear facility. There are no historical properties within the Industrial Area, which is the "area of potential effect" for this proposed action. The Rancho Seco site lies either wholly or partly in Sections 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, and 34 of Township 6 North, Range 8E. The Rancho Seco nuclear reactor unit and Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) lie wholly within Section 29.

In 1974, Rancho Seco was licensed to generate power by the NRC under License Number DPR-54. Due to a public vote on June 6, 1989, the District decided to permanently shut down Rancho Seco. Accordingly, on August 29, 1989, the District notified the NRC of its intent to seek amendments to the Rancho Seco operating license and decommission the facility. In

August 2002, the District completed the transfer of all of the Rancho Seco spent nuclear fuel into dry storage at the Rancho Seco ISFSI, licensed by the NRC under 10 CFR Part 72.

The Final Environmental Statement related to the operation of Rancho Seco Nuclear Generating Station Unit 1 (FES), issued in March 1973 by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (predecessor of the NRC), included an assessment of the historic and archeological significance of the Rancho Seco area. The assessment identified that there are approximately 20 historical landmarks within 15 miles of Rancho Seco, but none within a 10-mile radius of the site. The FES also summarized an archeological survey of the Rancho Seco area that was conducted by Sacramento State College to determine if prehistoric use of the area had taken place. Their survey did not find any archeological sites within the project area, nor was there any evidence of prehistoric occupation; however, it recommended that a further survey be made for archeological evidence if construction beyond the planned unit is undertaken.

Subsequently, in support of the license application to the California Energy Commission for the Cosumnes Power Plant, the District contracted for an additional cultural resources inventory for 220 acres at the Cosumnes Power Plant site (approximately 1 kilometer (1/2 mile) south of the Rancho Seco Industrial Area). This inventory identified two historical period archeological sites and one prehistoric period archeological resource. The study did not determine the significance of these sites.

The LTP documents the actions that the licensee plans to undertake to decontaminate and decommission the Rancho Seco site. Decommissioning Rancho Seco has not disturbed land beyond the Industrial Area and other paved areas of the Rancho Seco site. Principal decommissioning activities are dismantlement and decontamination of existing structures, excavation and remediation of contaminated soils in and around the plant structures, and off-site disposal of low-level radioactive waste. The licensee proposes to complete decommissioning of the facility by reducing residual radioactivity to levels that permit unrestricted release of the site as defined in 10 CFR 20.1402.

Currently, no permanent buildings or structures on site are scheduled for demolition. The switchyard is in use for the Consumnes Power Plant, the Interim Onsite Storage Building will be used for storage of Class B and C waste, the Administrative Building is used as an Emergency Operation Facility for the District in case Sacramento facilities are unavailable and the Secondary Alarm Station is used by ISFSI security personnel. Various other buildings may be used for office space or maintenance activities. The District may at some future date decide to demolish or refurbish any of the buildings or structures on site. However, the impacted structures (Reactor Building, Spent Fuel Building, and Auxiliary Building) are unlikely to be reused or demolished in the near future.

Many possible uses for the site or portions of the site have been considered but it will remain District property and the site's most likely use would be for future electric generation due to switchyard access and water availability.

Based on the administrative nature of this action, and that the plant decommissioning activities are limited to the previously disturbed Industrial Area, the NRC staff's preliminary determination is that the impact to cultural, historical, and archeological resources is not significant. To comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, your views are requested

regarding potential impacts to cultural and historical resources as a result of the NRC's proposed action.

After assessing the information provided by you, the NRC will determine what additional actions are necessary to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions or comments, or need any additional information, please contact Neil Haggerty of my staff at (301) 415-5196.

Sincerely,

/RA/

B. Jennifer Davis, Branch Chief
Environmental Review Branch
Division of Waste Management
and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs

Docket No: . 50-312
License No.: DPR-54

M. Donaldson

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