

June 11, 2012

James L. Richenderfer, Ph.D., P.G.  
Director, Technical Programs  
Susquehanna River Basin Commission  
1721 North Front Street  
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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL SCOPING  
PROCESS REGARDING THE REVISED SITE LAYOUT FOR THE BELL BEND  
NUCLEAR POWER PLANT COMBINED LICENSE APPLICATION REVIEW

Dear Dr. Richenderfer:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing a revised environmental report (ER) submitted on March 30, 2012, by PPL Bell Bend, LLC (PPL) in support of its initial application for a combined license (COL) for the construction and operation of one new nuclear power plant at its Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant (BBNPP) site near Berwick, Pennsylvania. This revised ER provides detailed information regarding PPL's revised site layout, which was developed to avoid wetland impacts by relocating the power block footprint and other plant components. The revised ER is available through the NRC's Agencywide Document Access Management System (ADAMS) and is accessible at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> under the ADAMS accession number ML12145A242. The document is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/col/bell-bend/documents.html#application>.

As part of the review of the COL application, the NRC is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) as required by Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 51, the NRC's regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District, which is a cooperating agency with the NRC for the purpose of complying with NEPA, is reviewing a joint permit application (JPA) that was submitted by PPL in June 2011 (and was revised in November). The EIS will document the NRC and USACE staff's evaluation of the impacts from the construction and operation of one new nuclear plant at the BBNPP site, including those involving the Clean Water Act and other laws related to your mission to manage, oversee, and protect the water and related natural resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. In addition, the NRC and USACE staff's EIS will consider alternatives, including alternative sites. The following four alternative sites will be evaluated in the EIS: the Montour site located in Derry Township in Montour County, Pennsylvania; the Humboldt site located in Humboldt Industrial Park west of the City of Hazleton in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania; the Seedco site located in Coal Township in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania; and the Martins Creek site located in Warren County, New Jersey, along the Delaware River.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the NRC and USACE are providing the public with an additional opportunity to submit scoping comments on the new information provided by PPL regarding the revised site layout. Please provide any information, comments, or concerns you feel are appropriate on the scope of the review, especially related to the revised site layout during the scoping comment period, which ends on July 16, 2012. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rulemaking, Announcements, and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001 or by e-mail to [BBNP.COLEIS@nrc.gov](mailto:BBNP.COLEIS@nrc.gov). When the NRC and USACE staff completes the draft EIS, a copy will be sent to your office for comment.

The BBNPP project boundary consists of approximately 2,055 acres in Salem Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, approximately 5 miles northeast of Berwick, Pennsylvania, near the west bank of the North Branch Susquehanna River, and it contains the BBNPP site and the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES). As a result of the revised site layout, the BBNPP site comprises an area of 975 acres within the BBNPP project boundary in an area of open deciduous woodlands interspersed with grasslands, previously cultivated fields, and orchards. The area of disturbance within the BBNPP site is approximately 677 acres. Land use in the immediate vicinity of the site is primarily forested and agricultural. The BBNPP site is located to the west of the SSES site, which has two operating boiling water reactors, Units 1 and 2, that have the capacity to generate 2,270 megawatts of electricity (MW(e)) combined. PPL is proposing to construct and operate an AREVA U.S. EPR reactor with an approximate output of 1,600 MW(e).

PPL has stated there is no need for new transmission lines or corridors to connect the new reactor unit to the existing electrical grid. The existing 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line is currently being modified to add the Susquehanna-Roseland Interconnection approved by the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland Regional Transmission Organization. This modification was planned independent of and without consideration of the BBNPP project. On the BBNPP site, planned facilities include one new 500-kV switchyard to transmit power from BBNPP, one new 500-kV transmission system switchyard (Susquehanna 500-kV Yard #2), expansion of the existing Susquehanna 500-kV Yard, and two new 500-kV, 4,260 megavolt-ampere circuits on individual towers connecting the BBNPP substation to the existing SSES 500-kV yard and to the proposed Susquehanna Yard #2. Additionally, the 230-kV transmission lines currently passing through the BBNPP site would be relocated to run to the north of Beach Grove Road in order to provide a buffer from the cooling towers and provide additional areas for the location of structures.

The proposed cooling system consists of a closed-cycle wet cooling system. The system will use two natural draft cooling towers for heat dissipation. An average rate of 23,808 gallons per minute would be withdrawn from the Susquehanna River to make up losses from evaporation, cooling tower drift, and blowdown discharge. Blowdown from the cooling towers would discharge to a common retention basin prior to discharging to the Susquehanna River.

J. Richenderfer

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If you have any questions concerning the environmental review of this COL application, please contact Mrs. Laura Quinn-Willingham, Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-2220 or via e-mail at [Laura.Quinn-Willingham@nrc.gov](mailto:Laura.Quinn-Willingham@nrc.gov). In her absence, please contact Mr. John Fringer at 301-415-6208 or via e-mail at [John.Fringer@nrc.gov](mailto:John.Fringer@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Anthony H. Hsia, Branch Chief  
Environmental Projects Branch 2  
Division of New Reactor Licensing  
Office of New Reactors

Docket No.: 52-039

cc: See next page

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If you have any questions concerning the environmental review of this COL application, please contact Mrs. Laura Quinn-Willingham, Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-2220 or via e-mail at [Laura.Quinn-Willingham@nrc.gov](mailto:Laura.Quinn-Willingham@nrc.gov). In her absence, please contact Mr. John Fringer at 301-415-6208 or via e-mail at [John.Fringer@nrc.gov](mailto:John.Fringer@nrc.gov).

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Docket No.: 52-039

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**Accession No.: ML12076A111** \*see previous concurrence block \*\*via email **NRO-002**

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