



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

May 17, 2013

Mr. Michael and Mrs. Kathy Panther  
129 Sunrise Ridge  
Sunset, SC 29685

Dear Mr. and Ms. Panther:

This letter is in response to your letter dated March 27, 2013, to Chairman Macfarlane of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), regarding Duke Energy's relicensing application for Lake Keowee. In your letter, you expressed your concern about the possibility that Duke Energy might lower the water level in Lake Keowee by five feet during drought conditions, and the negative effect this could have on waterfront lots and property values.

The NRC is the federal agency that regulates the commercial use of nuclear materials in the United States. As part of our mission, we ensure that commercial nuclear reactors are operated in a manner that protects public health and safety. We regulate the three Oconee Nuclear Station reactors that are located on the shore of Lake Keowee. We have previously evaluated the effect of low lake levels on those nuclear reactors and concluded that they can continue to operate safely as long as the level of Lake Keowee exceeds 791 feet, which is measured relative to mean sea level. If Lake Keowee goes below that value, and it is not restored in a short period of time, the reactors must be placed in cold shutdown. However, your concerns are with lake levels in the range of 790 feet to 800 feet, where 800 feet is the normal full lake level. Please be advised that the operational levels in Lake Keowee are regulated by a different federal agency, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Duke Energy holds the FERC license to operate Lake Keowee, and will be applying to FERC for a renewal of this license. For the management of lake levels, we suggest you send your comments to FERC for their consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert J. Pascarelli".

Robert J. Pascarelli, Chief  
Plant Licensing Branch II-1  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-269, 50-270, and 50-287

cc: Distribution via Listserv

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**/RA by RMartin for/**  
Robert J. Pascarelli, Chief  
Plant Licensing Branch II-1  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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