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SUBJECT: Discusses potential for surface entry & mining near plant sites.

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WASHINGTON PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM

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July 12, 1990
G02-90-124

Docket No. 50-397
Docket No. 50-460

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555

Gentlemen:

Subject: NUCLEAR PLANT NO. 1, DOCKET NO. 50-460
NUCLEAR PLANT NO. 2, OPERATING LICENSE NPF-21
POTENTIAL FOR SURFACE ENTRY AND MINING NEAR
WNP-1 AND WNP-2

Reference: Letter, GC Sorensen (SS) to BL Black, BLM Oregon State Office, "Proposed withdrawal, U.S. Department of Energy Hanford Site, Benton County, Washington", dated February 19, 1987

This letter addresses NRC interest in potential surface entry and mining near our Hanford Site nuclear power plants.

On June 18, 1986, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published in the Federal Register a notice of proposed continuation of withdrawals of certain lands within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Hanford Reservation (51 Federal Register 22138). The proposed withdrawal would segregate those lands from the public land laws, including the mining laws, causing them to remain closed to surface entry and mining. In the referenced letter, the Supply System provided a comment on this notice. The comment was that the BLM modify its proposal such that it would restrict mineral leasing in the vicinity of the WNP-1 and WNP-2 sites. The reason for providing this comment was not that we were aware of any outside interest in such activities but only that it seemed appropriate to have this additional level of control over activities near our plant sites.

On June 15, 1990 the Supply System discussed the status of the proposed action with the Bureau of Land Management's Oregon State Office. They informed us that the Withdrawal Review Process for this proposed action was underway with completion and notification of interested parties expected to occur in 1990. At that time the Supply System should be informed of the recommended response to our comment. We were also informed that final approval of any proposed withdrawals will require Congressional action. With this schedule and remaining actions required, it appears unlikely that the final response to our request will be known for several months.

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We believe there are several reasons why this issue does not need to remain as an open issue.

In the reference we stated that although some oil companies have drilled exploratory holes in the region, no commercial fields had yet been established. Today we know of no such exploratory operations. Also, should any oil deposits be found they would be below the basalt flows which are at least 14,000 feet thick under the Hanford Site and, as such, oil removal from such deposits would be of little concern to the WNP-1 and 2 structures.

During the last several years, the Supply System has directly funded several million dollars of site and regional geology and seismology studies. We have also followed such studies funded by others. Through these efforts we have not become aware of any minerals of economic interest on, or near, the Hanford Site.

The reference mentions controls that are already in place that would provide for review of such activities. These include the Supply System lease agreement with the DOE and the DOE review that also remain in place today.

In view of the following relative to the Hanford Site:

- lack of any known current interest in developing mining activities,
- lack of any known mineral deposits of economic interest,
- existing in place controls that would protect against such a venture without careful consideration given by the DOE to their activities, and
- the rights of the Supply System to raise concerns regarding such activities within its leased area and exclusion area boundary and our obligation to communicate the potential for such activities to the NRC,

we do not believe that the NRC need consider this an issue that requires their continued monitoring.

Very truly yours,

Alan Hosler

G. C. Sorensen, Manager
Regulatory Programs

AGH/bk
Attachments

cc: JB Martin - NRC RV
NS Reynolds - BCP&R
PL Eng - NRC
DL Williams - BPA/399
NRC Site Inspector - 901A