

11/10/82

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

In the Matter of)	
)	
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF)	
ENERGY PROJECT MANAGEMENT)	Docket No. 50-537
CORPORATION TENNESSEE VALLEY)	
AUTHORITY)	
)	
)	
(Clinch River Breeder)	
Reactor Plant))	

POSITION PAPER OF THE TENNESSEE ATTORNEY GENERAL
ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT MATTERS AND OTHER MATTERS
RELATING TO THE CLINCH RIVER BREEDER REACTOR PLANT

I. THE STATE'S POSTURE IN THESE PROCEEDINGS

The State of Tennessee, by and through the Tennessee Attorney General, is participating in the Clinch River Breeder Reactor Plant (CRBRP) licensing proceedings as an "interested state" pursuant to 10 C.F.R. § 2.715. (See Order of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, March 31, 1982). As the Atomic Safety and Licensing Appeal Board recognized in Project Mgmt. Corp., (Clinch River Breeder Reactor Plant), ALAB-354, NRCI-76/10 383, 391 (Oct. 29, 1976), "the State has a manifestly discernible interest in the well-being of its political subdivisions and in the adequacy of the services which they provide to their residents." In Project Mgmt. Corp., id., the Appeal Board affirmed the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board's denial

(LBP-76-31, NRCI-76/8 153 (Aug. 26, 1976)) as untimely of the petitions for leave to intervene of fourteen Tennessee counties and municipalities. In the course of its opinion, however the Appeal Board recognized that "the interests of the late petitioners both can and will be represented by [the State]." NRCI-76/10, supra, at 393 & n.16.

II. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CONCERNS IN THESE PROCEEDINGS

The issue of socio-economic impacts was placed in issue in these proceedings by Roane County's contention that:

The socio-economic impact of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor on the area in which the Clinch River Breeder Reactor is to be located, is not adequately assessed in the application. Impacts on schools and demands for local services during the construction phase of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor are understated in Chapters 8 and 11 of the applicant's environmental report.

Petition to Intervene on Behalf of Roane County, Tennessee (Aug. 29, 1975). See NRCI-76/8, supra, at 157. Although Roane County subsequently withdrew as a party (See Order of the Atomic Safety & Licensing Board, Dec. 13, 1976), the Appeal Board had previously addressed this eventuality in NRCI-76/10, supra at 392, n.13, stating:

It is clear that, even if Roane County should withdraw from the proceeding, the socio-economic impact of Clinch River construction and operation on neighboring communities will remain an issue - albeit not a contested issue except as to Oak Ridge proper - in the proceeding. The Draft Environmental Statement addresses that impact (Section 4.5) and we understand that the yet-to-be-issued Final Environmental Statement will also do so and in greater detail. And the Licensing Board has an independent obligation, of course, to consider the subject in the discharge of its NEPA responsibilities. Among other things, the Board must determine whether there is likely to be such impact and whether there are means at its disposal to require the applicants to take measures to lessen the burdens which will be imposed upon the local governments and the communities served by them.

The Attorney General submitted comments on the Draft Supplement to the Final Environmental Statement which indicated the State's dissatisfaction with the adequacy of the monitoring and mitigation proposal made by the NRC Staff. (Draft Supp. § 4.6.2(c) at 4-28). Although the State has chosen not to contest the Applicants' or the Staff's analysis of possible socio-economic impacts, it has made this decision with the reservation that these impact forecasts are merely predictions of what might occur. The state of the art is not such that accuracy can be guaranteed; these predictions are instead surrounded by a veil of uncertainty.

The Staff has recognized this drawback by its conclusion that:

[l]ocal costs for additional public services needed by construction workers and other project personnel and their families would probably not exceed the local benefits from the project. The staff's opinion is that the only reliable way to establish the balance between local costs and benefits caused by CRBRP construction is for a monitoring program to be established.

Draft Supp. § 4.6.2(c) at 4-28 and Supplement to Final Envir. Statement § 4.6.2(c) at 4-29. (emphasis added). The State requests that a monitoring program be made a condition of licensure.

Further, as was stated in the Tennessee Attorney General's comments on the Draft Supplement:

The Attorney General is especially concerned over the Applicants' failure to address the socio-economic effects of a possible mid-construction project shutdown or other premature plant closure. . . . Should this project be cancelled or terminated during the construction phase of the project, the Attorney General fears that the harmful effects of such premature project closure may be significant.

. . . The Attorney General believes the history of this project shows that such an eventuality is not and should not be relegated to mere speculation but is a very possible scenario which should be addressed. In addition, the Attorney General feels that any program developed

to monitor and address the mitigation of adverse socio-economic impact should include the impacts of premature plant closure.

As the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit recognized in Carolina Environmental Study Group v. U.S., 510 F.2d 796, 799 (D.C. Cir. 1975), "Because each statement on the environmental impact of a proposed action involves educated predictions rather than certainties, it is entirely proper, and necessary, to consider the probabilities as well as the consequences of certain occurrences in ascertaining their environmental impact." Although it is true, as the Court recognized, that "[t]here is a point at which the probability of an occurrence may be so low as to render it almost totally unworthy of consideration," id., the Attorney General submits that the possibility of premature plant closure is not so speculative that it can be ignored. Indeed, a review of the history of this project clearly shows that such a possibility is very real.¹ It is evident that the future of the Clinch River

¹*April, 1977 - President Carter "indefinitely" defers project, citing it as uneconomic and a risk to nuclear proliferation. See Statement of President Jimmy Carter, Nuclear Power Policy, 13 Weekly Comp. of Pres. Doc. 506-507 (April 11, 1977). Licensing Proceedings Suspended. See Order of the Atomic Safety & Licensing Board, April 25, 1977.

*July, 1981 - Continued funding for project upheld in the House of Representatives by a mere twenty vote margin. See 127 Cong. Rec. H4839-4862 (July 24, 1981).

*Nov., 1981 - Continued funding for the project upheld in the Senate by only two votes. See 127 Cong. Rec.

Project hangs in precarious balance in Congress and the prospect of a mid-construction termination of the project is not so farfetched that it can be ignored. The Attorney General thus contends that any monitoring and mitigation program should extend to cover such an eventuality.

The Attorney General is particularly concerned that the results of a monitoring program be translated into action which minimizes adverse socio-economic impacts that may arise. The NRC Staff has recommended that "negotiations should be conducted with [the State of Tennessee and affected local government entities] so agreement can be reached on financial assistance and/or other suitable measures to mitigate adverse impacts of the project." Draft Supp. § 4.6.2(c) and Supp. § 4.2.6(c). (emphasis added). The Attorney General has two concerns in relation to this recommendation:

[1] The proposal does not actually commit the Applicants to mitigate; rather, the NRC Staff suggests that they "should negotiate." Thus, the Attorney General requests that the mitigation responsibility be made a condition of the Applicants' licensure.

[2] Although the NRC Staff mentions "financial assistance" among other miti-

S12858 (Nov. 4, 1981).

*September, 1982 - Vote to delete funding for the project for fiscal year 1983 fails by only one vote. See 128 Cong. Rec. S12468-9 (September 29, 1982).

gation measures, the Attorney General asserts that this element of the proposal should be more detailed. The license should include specific conditions as to the types of financial assistance the Applicants will be required to provide to address adverse impacts that may be identified by the monitoring program.

In the Supplement to Final Environmental Statement, the NRC Staff has concluded in its "Discussion Of Comments Received On The Draft Supplement To The Final Environmental Statement" § 12.4.5 at 12-20:

The Staff had considered imposing a formal mitigation process on the Applicants as a requirement on the construction permit and license. However, because the Applicants would be the only party to the mitigation process subject to NRC regulations, this approach was rejected.

In response, the Attorney General vigorously objects to the Staff's conclusion with the observation that the conclusion is a nonsequitur.

The Applicants have indicated to the State their position that the only financial assistance that they may make, or be ordered to make by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, to offset adverse socio-economic impacts of the CRBRP is in the nature of in-lieu-of-tax-payments pursuant to the Atomic Energy Community Act of 1955 (42 U.S.C. § 2301 et seq.).

The Attorney General vigorously contests the Applicants' seeming attempt to limit their responsibility for minimizing adverse impacts of the Project. Payments in-lieu-of-taxes are only one facet of financial mitigation. Social or economic impacts other than the Project's affect on the local tax base may require financial redress. In addition, the Atomic Energy Community Act is applicable only to the City of Oak Ridge, Anderson County, and Roane County. If the Applicants' position is to be accepted, adverse impacts in areas outside those three jurisdictions, such as West Knox County, would not be redressable.

The Attorney General asserts that the NRC has the authority, indeed, since Calvert Cliffs' Coordinating Comm. v. United States Atomic Energy Comm'n., 146 U.S. App. D.C. 33, 449 F.2d 1109 (1971), the obligation, to require that the adverse environmental effects (including socio-economic effects) of projects over which it has licensing responsibility are minimized. If the Applicants' license is granted, it should be conditioned to require the Applicants to mitigate adverse socio-economic impacts by financial assistance which is not limited to the in-lieu-of-tax payments the Applicants are authorized to make pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 2301 et seq.

III. THE NEPA MITIGATION REQUIREMENT

At the outset, it is clear that "socio-economic effects do fall within the environmental effects of proposed action of which NEPA mandates agency evaluation and consideration." McDowell v. Schlesinger, 404 F.Supp. 221, 245 (W.D. Mo. 1975). See also People Against Nuclear Energy v. United States Nuclear Reg. Comm'n., 678 F.2d 222, 230 (D.C. Cir.), cert. granted, ____ (1982); Image of Greater San Antonio, Tex. v. Brown, 570 F.2d 517, 522 (5th Cir. 1978). Thus, such effects fall within the purview of Calvert Cliffs', supra, and require the NRC's attention in the exercise of its licensing responsibility.

NEPA carries with it a requirement that the mitigation of adverse environmental impacts be undertaken. Thus, as the CEQ Binding Regulations State, it is the policy of NEPA to ensure that federal agencies:

[u]se all practicable means . . . to . . .
avoid or minimize any possible adverse
effects of their actions upon the quality
of the human environment.

40 CFR § 1500.2(f) (1981). As stated in Sierra Club v. Froehlke, 359 F.Supp. 1289, 1339 (S.D. Tex. 1973), rev'd. on other grounds, 499 F.2d 982 (5th Cir. 1974), "NEPA states indirectly, but affirmatively, that under some circumstances federal agencies must mitigate some and possibly all of the

environmental impacts arising from a proposed project." Accord, Stop H-3 Assoc. v. Brinegar, 389 F.Supp. 1102, 1111 (D. Haw. 1974), rev'd. on other grounds sub nom. Stop H-3 Assoc. v. Coleman, 533 F.2d 434 (9th Cir. 1976).

The CEQ Binding Regulations seek to implement NEPA's mitigation policy by requiring mitigation measures to be included in the agency's discussion of alternatives and environmental consequences. See 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.14(f) & 1502.16(h). However, the agency's mitigation responsibility does not end with mere discussion in the environmental statement of the need for mitigation. The CEQ Regulations indicate that mitigation is to be an important factor in the agency decision-making process. Thus, the agency's announced decision is required to:

State whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted, and if not, why they were not. A monitoring and enforcement program shall be adopted and summarized where applicable for any mitigation.

40 C.F.R. § 1505.2(c). See also 40 C.F.R. § 1505.3 (implementing the decision).

IV. THE NRC'S OBLIGATION TO REQUIRE MITIGATION
AND CONDITION LICENSURE

The NRC has the obligation to ensure that the Applicants will mitigate adverse socio-economic impacts of the CRBRP. As stated in Public Service Co. v. United States Nuclear Reg. Comm'n., 582 F.2d 77, 85 (1st Cir.), cert. denied, 439 U.S. 1046, 99 S.Ct. 721, 58 L.Ed.2d 705 (1978), once "the Commission has jurisdiction over the [project] . . . it [is] clear that, under the dictates of NEPA, it [is] obliged to minimize adverse environmental impact flowing therefrom." More recently, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, in People Against Nuclear Energy v. United States Nuclear Reg. Comm'n., supra, wrestled with the issue of the cognizability under NEPA of impacts on psychological health. In reaching its decision, the Court noted that socio-economic anxieties (as opposed to effects) have consistently been rejected as environmental impacts under NEPA. However the Court stated:

The agency fulfills its responsibilities under NEPA in this context if it considers and mitigates the underlying causes for alarm, such as the possibility of increased noise, increased crime, and increased congestion.

678 F.2d at 229 (emphasis added).

The NRC has previously recognized its duty to "consider and seek to mitigate significant environmental

impacts" Kansas Gas & Electric Co. (Wolf Creek, Unit No. 1) CLI-77-1, 5 NRC 1, 7 (Jan. 12, 1977). As stated by the Appeal Board in Detroit Edison Co. (Greenwood Energy Ctr., Units 2 & 3) ALAB-247, RAI-74-12 936, 944 (Dec. 20, 1974), the NRC, under NEPA, "is obliged to minimize to the extent reasonably practicable environmental aftermath of its actions."

The requirement to mitigate adverse socio-economic impacts should expressly be made a condition of licensure. The NRC clearly has authority to "issue conditional licenses for regulatory purposes. There can be no objection to its use of the same means to achieve environmental means as well. Detroit Edison Co. v. United States Nuclear Reg. Comm'n., 630 F.2d 450, 454 (6th Cir. 1980) (citation omitted). The Commission itself has stated that there "can be no serious dispute" as to its authority, in considering environmental impacts, to "where necessary impose license conditions to minimize those impacts." Kansas Gas & Electric Co. (Wolf Creek, Unit No. 1), supra, 5 NRC at 8. See also Tennessee Valley Auth. (Phipps Bend, Units 1 & 2) ALAB-506, 8 NRC 533, 550 (Nov. 9, 1978) ("NRC . . . indisputably possesses the right to grant conditional licenses and construction permits . . . to implement the purposes of NEPA.").

V. THE NRC'S AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
OF THE APPLICANTS FOR MITIGATION PURPOSES.

As indicated, supra, the Applicants, DOE in particular, have asserted that the only financial assistance which is available or which may be required for mitigation purposes is that provided by the Atomic Energy Community Act of 1954. To the extent, if at all, that TVA and/or PMC are not considered by the Applicants as sources for financial assistance for mitigation because of contractual arrangements between them which delineates responsibilities (financial and otherwise) between DOE, TVA, and PMC, the State asserts, first, that the Applicants cannot rely on contractual arrangements among themselves to defeat the purposes and mandates of NEPA. All three of these entities are Applicants and all must meet licensing conditions, including the requirements of NEPA. Any attempt to insulate NEPA obligations under a facade of a contractual inability to perform is a shocking violation of public policy and the State contends that the Board has the authority to order mitigation to be provided by all of the Applicants.

Secondly, even assuming for the sake of argument that mitigation measures are limited to being provided by DOE, the State rejects DOE's assertion that its ability (and consequently, its liability) to provide financial mitigation is limited to the Atomic Energy Community Act. NEPA pro-

vides, in pertinent part:

The Congress . . . declares that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government . . . to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.

42 U.S.C. § 4331(a) (emphasis added). Further, Congress has declared:

In order to carry out the policy set forth in this chapter, it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means . . . to improve and coordinate Federal plans, functions, programs, and resources

42 U.S.C. § 4331(b). The above-quoted policy statement of NEPA clearly illustrates the congressional intent for the Federal Government to mitigate the adverse social and economic impacts of federal projects. Congress specifically directed that financial and technical assistance should be provided towards this end. As the Court in Detroit Edison Co., supra, 630 F.2d at 452 observed, "A congressional directive to 'consider' environmental factors is meaningless unless agencies can also act to minimize the environmental damage attributable to their licensees."

All federal agencies are to comply with the requirements of Section 102 of NEPA (42 U.S.C. § 4332) "to the fullest extent possible" As stated in Flint Ridge Dev. Co. v. Scenic Rivers Assoc. of Oklahoma, 426 U.S. 776, 787-8, 96 S.Ct. 2430, 2438, 49 L.Ed.2d 305 (1976):

The purpose of the new language is to make clear that each agency of the Federal Government shall comply with the directives set out in [§ 102(2)] unless the existing law applicable to such agency's operations expressly prohibits or makes full compliance with one of the directives impossible Thus, it is the intent of the conferees that the provision 'to the fullest extent possible' shall not be used by any Federal agency as a means of avoiding compliance with the directives set out in section 102.

Accord 40 C.F.R. § 1500.6. As stated in Calvert Cliffs' Coordinating Comm., supra, 449 F.2d at 1115, n.12 "only when such specific obligations conflict with NEPA, do agencies have a right under § 104 and the 'fullest extent possible' language to dilute their compliance with the full letter and spirit of the Act."

It is true that "NEPA was not intended to repeal by implication any other statute," United States v. SCRAP, 412 U.S. 669, 694, 93 S.Ct. 2405, 2419, 37 L.Ed.2d 254 (1973), and that "Section 102 recognizes . . . that where a clear and unavoidable conflict in the statutory authority exists, NEPA must give way," Flint Ridge Dev. Co. v. Scenic Rivers

Assoc. of Oklahoma, 426 U.S. 776, 788, 96 S.Ct. 2430, 2438, 49 L.Ed.2d 305 (1976). However, "Section 102 exempts agencies from compliance only when other statutory authority under which the agencies are proceeding expressly precludes compliance." Environmental Defense Fund v. Tennessee Valley Auth., 468 F.2d 1164, 1176 (6th Cir. 1972) (emphasis added). Accord, Tennessee Valley Auth. (Phipps Bend, Units 1 & 2), supra, 8 NRC at 545. The State sees no conflict between DOE's authority to make in-lieu-of-tax payments pursuant to the Atomic Energy Community Act and a requirement that DOE provide financial mitigation measures in addition to such in-lieu-of-tax payments. Nothing in the Atomic Energy Act indicates that the statute "expressly precludes compliance" with NEPA.

Section 105 of NEPA (42 U.S.C. § 4335) provides:

The policies and goals set forth in this chapter are supplementary to those set forth in existing authorizations of Federal agencies.

Thus, as stated in Detroit Edison Co. (Greenwood Energy Ctr., Units 2 & 3), ALAB-247, RAI-74-12 936, 938 (Dec. 20, 1974), "NEPA's enactment substantially broadened the environmental responsibilities of the Federal Government by making the policies of that Act 'supplementary to those set forth in existing authorizations of Federal agencies.'"

Accord Kansas Gas & Electric Co. (Wolf Creek Station, Unit No. 1), ALAB-321, NRCI-76/4 293, 305 & 306 (Apr. 7, 1976), aff'd., CLI-77-1, 5 NRC 1 (Jan. 12, 1977).

In sum, NEPA does not prevent NRC from conditioning a project by requiring DOE to provide financial assistance to mitigate adverse impacts, above and beyond in-lieu-of-tax payments, although such financial assistance is not expressly authorized by the Atomic Energy Act. As the Appeal Board made clear in Tennessee Valley Auth. (Phipps Bend, Units 1 & 2), supra, 8 NRC at 544:

NEPA added to the Commission's original responsibilities in the sense that it must now consider and act to prevent or minimize the adverse environmental . . . consequences of the facilities it licenses. And . . . the Atomic Energy Act in general . . . [does not bar] the inclusion in licenses for government-owned plants of conditions designed to achieve such results.

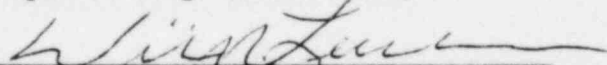
(emphasis added).

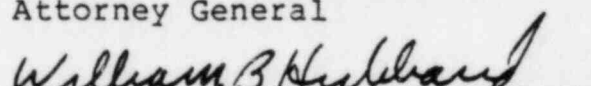
VI. OBJECTION TO LICENSING PROCEEDINGS.

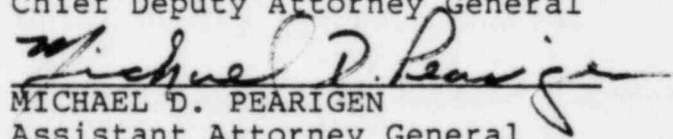
The Attorney General takes this opportunity to note our continuing objection to the exemption granted the Applicants under 10 C.F.R. § 50.12 from normal licensing procedures. We have previously objected before the commission to the granting of an exemption from regular NRC

procedures in order to begin site preparation for the Clinch River Breeder Reactor Project before a construction permit has been issued. As we have noted before, the regular procedures of the commission carry out the legislative mandate of NEPA and the Atomic Energy Act, to protect human health, the environment, and public security. The Attorney General's concern is that the large financial commitment required for site preparation work will later be used to give undue weight to economic factors and to sweep aside other major issues. Such issues include whether the project should be constructed in light of its costs and benefits, what design is most appropriate to meeting the goals of the project, what the environmental and socio-economic impacts the project may be, and how these effects can be mitigated. We feel that in the longrun, following regular licensing procedures will serve to expedite rather than delay the ultimate licensing decisions on the project.

Respectfully submitted,


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Reactor Plant))	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing has been mailed to the following via expedited mail where indicated by an asterisk and otherwise via first-class U.S. mail, postage prepaid on this the 10th day of November, 1982:

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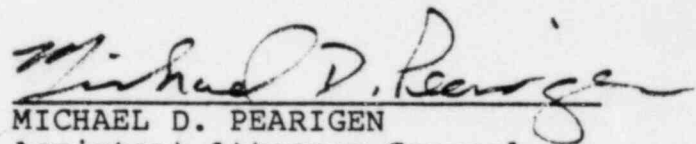
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