

United States Senate

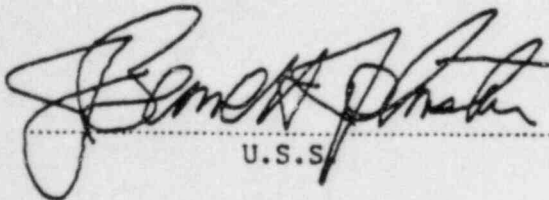
May 31, 1984

Respectfully referred to:

Mr. Carlton Kammerer
Director, Office of Congressional Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Kammerer:

Because of the desire of this office to be responsive to all inquiries and communications, your consideration of the attached is requested. Your findings and views, in duplicate form, along with return of the enclosure, will be appreciated by June 26, 1984.



U.S.S.

Form #2

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 31, 1984

Mr. Wm. Clifford Smith
P.O. Box 2266
Houma, Louisiana 70361

Dear Clifford:

Thank you for your recent letter in which you express concern over the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing procedures for nuclear generating facilities and in particular the problems which have developed involving the Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1 facility.

In response to your request, I have contacted officials of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission here in Washington to ask that they do everything possible to expedite action on the operating license for this plant. As soon as a reply is received, I will be back in touch with you.

Clifford, it is good to hear from you, and please stay in touch whenever you feel I can be helpful.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely,

J. Bennett Johnston
United States Senator

JBj:vc

Wm. Clifford Smith

P. O. Box 2266

Houma, Louisiana 70361

May 18, 1984

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The Honorable J. Bennett Johnston
Congress of the United States
Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Johnston:

As you may know, I am a member of the Board of Directors of Middle South Utilities, Inc. and Louisiana Power & Light Company. Middle South Utilities, Inc. is a holding company which owns New Orleans Public Service, Inc., Louisiana Power & Light Company, Mississippi Power & Light Company, and Arkansas Power & Light Company. As you also may know, Middle South Utilities, Inc., through its subsidiaries, is hopefully on the verge of obtaining an operating license for both the Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1 nuclear generating facility and Waterford 3 nuclear generating facility.

I believe, as should any reasonable person who lives in the United States of America in the 1980's, that in order to be competitive with industry and jobs we must have a dependable, uninterruptable, reasonable, cost competitive electrical utility. Our society is now geared to the continuing use of electrical energy. Therefore, I think it is imperative that Louisiana have this dependable and economically reasonable electrical utility in order to be competitive with industries from other states.

Again, everyone who is knowledgeable in this field believes that one way to obtain this much-needed source of energy is to diversify the fuel needed for generation and to obtain the most economical methods of generating electricity. It is my understanding that the nuclear facilities, even with their extreme additional initial costs of construction are still the most economical way to generate electricity in this area.

I am enclosing to you a copy of a status report dated April 30 concerning Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1 and the problems that have arisen regarding their obtaining authorization to operate at full power. As you can tell from this report, it seems that the bureaucratic requirements and regulations that have recently been developed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will cause extremely costly delays for the Middle South System, most of which I am sure the general public does not understand.

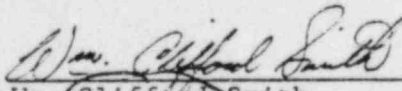
The Honorable J. Bennett Johnston
May 18, 1984
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I think the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is costing, and will continue to cost, the citizens of Louisiana many millions of dollars because of their ridiculous bureaucratic procedures in licensing nuclear energy facilities. The problems that are developing regarding licensing of nuclear generating facilities, and particularly the problems that have developed concerning the Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1 facility, and the consequences that the people of Louisiana will suffer because of the bureaucratic procedures are of great concern to me. I feel it is imperative for us in Louisiana to use the resources we have at our disposal to see that these facilities are put into commercial operation in the quickest possible time while, at the same time, adhering to all reasonable safety requirements.

If you deem it appropriate, I would appreciate your contacting the Nuclear Regulatory Commission authorities, or any other appropriate authorities, in an attempt to facilitate the operating license for the plant. I would also appreciate any assistance and/or suggestions that you could give to me, as a citizen and rate payer, or to the companies that I represent regarding the expediting of the licensing for this plant.

I look forward to hearing from you soon concerning this matter.

Sincerely,


Wm. Clifford Smith

WCS/cl

Encl.

GRAND GULF NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT NO. 1
LICENSING STATUS REPORT
APRIL 30, 1984

Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1, received an operating license in June of 1982, which authorized operations at up to 5% of full power. Since that time, MP&L has completed low power testing of the Unit and has satisfactorily addressed various issues raised by the NRC concerning such matters as qualification of reactor operators, the accuracy of the Grand Gulf Technical Specifications, the reliability of the Unit's two Transamerica Delaval, Inc. (TDI) diesel generators, and the training of Shift Advisers. MP&L is now operating Unit No. 1 at approximately 5% power, awaiting the issuance by the NRC of an amendment to its license, which would authorize operations to full power.

Unit No. 1 is ready now in all respects to receive authorization to operate at full power. However, the NRC Staff has recently taken steps which would require MP&L to completely disassemble and inspect one or both of the two TDI diesel generators at Grand Gulf and to make approximately 200 additional changes to the Unit's Technical Specifications. These additional requirements, if imposed, would be arbitrary and unnecessary and could not be reasonably supported by technical or safety considerations. Furthermore, these requirements could unjustifiably delay the issuance of the full power authorization and ultimately commercial operation of the Unit for up to three additional months at a cost to the Middle South System of approximately \$1.2 million per day.

As part of a detailed program to establish the reliability of the Grand Gulf TDI diesel generators, MP&L completely disassembled, inspected, refurbished and tested the diesel generators, and confirmed that they will perform satisfactorily. Furthermore, to compensate for the fact that problems have been discovered at other nuclear facilities, which question the reliability of TDI diesels generally, MP&L has enhanced the reliability of off-site power to the Grand Gulf site by, among other things, installing three portable combustion turbine generators, which would supply power to the site in an emergency. The Grand Gulf TDI diesels are reliable, and the off-site electrical power system at Grand Gulf not only exceeds NRC requirements, but also is one of the best in the Country.

In March of this year, MP&L undertook a comprehensive review of the Grand Gulf Technical Specifications. As a result of that review, MP&L identified all changes, which were necessary to safely support full power operation of the Unit. All of these changes have now been made to the Technical Specifications. While the NRC Staff apparently agrees that all necessary changes have been made to the Technical Specifications for full power operations, last week it informed MP&L that it will want approximately 200 additional changes made to the Technical Specifications before it will support operations above 5% power. None of these 200 changes are safety-significant or are required for operations up to full power. They are also the type changes that in other nuclear facilities would be made routinely while such facilities were operating. If the NRC requires all of these changes to be made at this time, the result could be a delay of up to six weeks in issuance of the full power authorization.

It is essential (1) that the NRC schedule a Commission meeting for consideration of a full power operating license for Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1, during the month of May, (2) that the NRC reconsider its position on disassembly of the TDI diesels and accept MP&L's position on their demonstrated reliability, but if the NRC Staff requires the disassembly and inspection of one or both of the TDI diesel generators, it do so only after issuance of the full power authorization, and (3) that the NRC Staff not require MP&L to make the approximately 200 additional and unnecessary Technical Specification changes at this time. Grand Gulf, Unit No. 1, is ready now to receive its full power authorization and begin its power ascension program to support commercial operation of the Unit in the fourth quarter of this year. This is still a reasonable expectation; however, the schedule could be delayed by the imposition of unreasonable requirements which seem to result from bureaucratic politics and indecision within the NRC Staff.

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

(This address applies to all of the
below listed NRC Officers)

Chairman Nuzio Palladino (202) 634-1481
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Commissioner Victor Gilinsky (202) 634-1461

Commissioner James K. Asselstine (202) 634-3308

Commissioner Thomas M. Roberts (202) 634-1459

Commissioner Fredrick Bernthal (202) 634-3323

Mr. Harold R. Denton, Director (301) 492-7511
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Mr. William J. Dircks (301) 492-7691
Executive Director of Operations