UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 1
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE, SUITE 100
BOSTON, MA 02109-3912

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

June 28, 2013

Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration
Mail Stop TWB-05-B01M
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Re: NUREG-1437, Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Supplement 46 Regarding Seabrook Station, Second Draft Report for Comment, CEQ#20130103

Dear Sir/Madam:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) Second Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the potential relicensing of the Seabrook Station Nuclear Power Station (Seabrook or Seabrook Station) in Seabrook, New Hampshire. The NRC has issued the supplement to the DSEIS for public comment in support of its decision on the application submitted by NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC (NextEra) for relicensing Seabrook under the Atomic Energy Act. The NRC prepared the supplement to the DSEIS to provide new information NRC staff obtained since the DSEIS was published in August 2011.

The proposed action and purpose and need related to the NExtEra application for renewal of Seabrook's operating license for an additional 20 years remain unchanged from the DSEIS. Seabrook began commercial operation in 1990 and its existing license will expire in 2030. Seabrook's net electrical capacity is 1,245 megawatts-electric (MWe) and it is located approximately two miles west of the shore of the Atlantic Ocean.

EPA reviewed and commented on the DSEIS in 2011. Our detailed comments focused on a number of environmental issues including the effects of the facility's cooling system on the environment from water withdrawals and discharges and ways to avoid, reduce, and mitigate those impacts. Our comments also recommended a more complete consideration of alternative plant cooling system scenarios for the relicensing period and recommended that the EIS address other operational impacts, including the entrainment and impingement of fish and other aquatic organisms, and releases of tritium to groundwater.

We reviewed new information regarding tritium releases contained in the supplement and note that our DSEIS comments on groundwater remain unchanged. Those comments suggested that information related to groundwater tritium contamination at Seabrook should be made easily accessible to the public. In response to the recent supplement, we re-emphasize that need. Although the supplement states that monitoring results are reported to the NRC, monitoring results should also be reported directly to the public, for example, through a dedicated website such as that used by Vermont Yankee and the VT Department of Health for tritium contamination at the Vermont Yankee site. Reporting this information publicly will ensure improved transparency on groundwater contamination issues and facilitate reviews of actions taken to monitor and contain contaminated groundwater.

As the NRC prepares the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) for the project, we ask that both this letter, and our October 26, 2011 comments on the DSEIS be addressed. For the reasons discussed in our previous comments on the DSEIS and our comments above, EPA has rated this DSEIS "EC-2 Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information" in accordance with EPA's national rating system, a description of which is attached to this letter. We look forward to reviewing responses to our comments in the FSEIS. EPA is available to provide additional input, as necessary, to help the NRC respond to our comments. Please feel free to contact Timothy Timmermann of the Office of Environmental Review at 617/918-1025 if you wish to discuss these comments further.

Sincerely,

H. Curtis Spalding
Regional Administrator

Attachment

Summary of Rating Definitions and Follow-up Action

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO--Lack of Objections
The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC--Environmental Concerns
The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EO--Environmental Objections
The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU--Environmentally Unsatisfactory
The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1--Adequate
EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2--Insufficient Information
The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3–Inadequate
EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.