



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 4, 2000

The Honorable David Price
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Price:

I am responding to your letter of December 3, 1999, regarding the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's plans to hold a public meeting to discuss Carolina Power & Light Company's (CP&L's) license amendment request to increase the spent fuel storage capacity at its Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant (HNP). In my letter of November 1, 1999, I indicated that we were deferring a public meeting in light of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) hearing and limited appearance statement sessions. I also indicated that as the formal hearing proceeds, we would continue to evaluate the need for a public meeting to discuss CP&L's amendment request.

Based on the comments I received from the NRC staff who participated in the ASLB limited appearance statement sessions on December 7 and 8, 1999, it is apparent that a public meeting to discuss the NRC's review process and the status of the review of CP&L's request may be beneficial. As I'm sure you appreciate, though, the hearing before the ASLB involves a formal adjudicatory process which culminates in a decision based only on the evidence contained in the record developed by all parties to proceeding. The NRC staff, like the licensee (CP&L), and the intervener (The Board of Commissioners of Orange County, North Carolina) is a party. (The information you had received indicating that the comments of those making limited appearance statements are not part of the evidentiary record upon which a decision can be based is correct.) According to the schedule established by the ASLB, the parties will submit written testimony on the matters in controversy on January 4, 2000, and oral argument based on these submissions will be held before the ASLB on January 21, 2000. As a practical matter, because of the need to prepare the staff's submittal and participate in the hearing, a public meeting cannot be scheduled until sometime after the latter date.

Accordingly, the NRC staff will schedule a public meeting in the vicinity of HNP in the February - March time frame to further discuss the license amendment process including the staff's review of CP&L's request. Although comments made by the public to the staff at a public meeting, whether or not related to the currently pending licensing action, do not constitute information upon which the ASLB's decision can be based, please be assured that should any information

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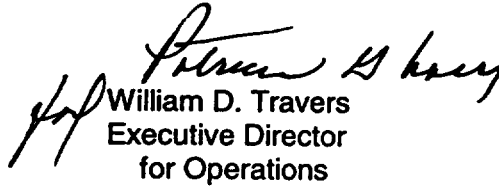
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The Honorable D. Price

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conveyed to the staff indicate a safety concern bearing on any aspect of the operation of this facility, the staff will give it due consideration, including, if it substantively affects the staff's position on a matter in controversy, advising the ASLB.

Sincerely,


William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

Docket No. 50-400

cc: See next page

Carolina Power & Light Company

cc:

Mr. William D. Johnson
Vice President and Corporate Secretary
Carolina Power & Light Company
Post Office Box 1551
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

Resident Inspector/Harris NPS
c/o U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
5421 Shearon Harris Road
New Hill, North Carolina 27562-9998

Ms. Karen E. Long
Assistant Attorney General
State of North Carolina
Post Office Box 629
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

Public Service Commission
State of South Carolina
Post Office Drawer
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Mr. Mel Fry, Director
Division of Radiation Protection
N.C. Department of Environment
and Natural Resources
3825 Barrett Dr.
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609-7721

Mr. Terry C. Morton
Manager
Performance Evaluation and
Regulatory Affairs CPB 9
Carolina Power & Light Company
Post Office Box 1551
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602-1551

Mr. Bo Clark
Plant General Manager - Harris Plant
Carolina Power & Light Company
Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
P.O. Box 165
New Hill, North Carolina 27562-0165

Mr. John H. O'Neill, Jr.
Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge
2300 N Street, NW.
Washington, DC 20037-1128

Mr. James Scarola
Vice President-Harris Plant
Carolina Power & Light Company
Post Office Box 165, MC: Zone 1
New Hill, NC 27562-0165

**Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
Unit 1**

Mr. Chris L. Burton
Director of Site Operations
Carolina Power & Light Company
Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
Post Office Box 165, MC: Zone 1
New Hill, North Carolina 27562-0165

Mr. Robert P. Gruber
Executive Director
Public Staff NCUC
Post Office Box 29520
Raleigh, North Carolina 27626

**Chairman of the North Carolina
Utilities Commission**
Post Office Box 29510
Raleigh, North Carolina 27626-0510

Mr. Vernon Malone, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
of Wake County
P. O. Box 550
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

Mr. Richard H. Givens, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
of Chatham County
P. O. Box 87
Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312

Ms. Donna B. Alexander, Manager
Regulatory Affairs
Carolina Power & Light Company
Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
P.O. Box 165, Mail Zone 1
New Hill, NC 27562-0165

Mr. Johnny H. Eads, Supervisor
Licensing/Regulatory Programs
Carolina Power & Light Company
Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant
P. O. Box 165, Mail Zone 1
New Hill, NC 27562-0165

Ms. Diane Curran
Harmon, Curran, Spielberg, and Eisenberg, L.L.P.
1726 M Street NW., Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036

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Original Signed by
Patricia G. Norry *for*

William D. Travers
 Executive Director
 for Operations

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Cotter, ASLBP

cc:

Mr. William Sutton
Town Manager
PO BOX 250
Apex, NC 27502

Mr. William Coleman, Jr.
Town Manager
PO BOX 8005
Cary, NC 27512-8005

Mr. Larry Bennett
Town Manager
1300 E. Academy Street
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526

Mr. Peter Bine
Town Manager
PO BOX 446
Garner, NC 27529

Mr. James Dolle
Town Manager
PO BOX 8
Holly Springs, NC 27540

Mr. Gary Mc Conkey
Town Manager
PO BOX 640
Knightdale, NC 27545

Mr. David Hodgkins
Town Manager
PO BOX 166
Morrisville, NC 27560

Mr. Dempsey Benton, Jr.
City Manager
PO BOX 590
Raleigh, NC. 27602

Mr. Donald Dubay
Town Manager
PO BOX 250
Rolesville, NC 27571

Mr. Mark Williams
Town Manager
401 Elm Ave
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Mr. Ira Fuller
Town Manager
PO BOX 828
Wendel, NC 27591

Mr. Jonathan Koffa
Town Manager
100 N. Arendell Ave
Zebulon, NC 27597-2837

Mr. Herbert Hincks
Chairman
Board of Commissioners
Lee County
2207 Wilkins Drive
Sanford, NC 27330

Mr. William Cowan
Country Manager
Lee County
PO BOX 1968
Sanford, NC 27331-1968

Mr. Winston Hester
Mayor of Sanford
PO BOX 216
Sanford, NC 27331

Mr. Harold Harrington
Mayor Broadway
113 Smith Drive
Broadway, NC 27505

Mr. Dan Andrews
Board of Commissioners Harnett County
PO BOX 759
102 E. Front Street
Lillington, NC 27546

Penny LeBourgeois
NC State University
Campus Box 7920
NCSU Centennial Campus
Raleigh, NC 27695

Carl Rupert
952 Clarion Drive
Durham, NC 27705

cc:

Ms. Mary MacDowell
Chatham County Preferred Site Committee
PO BOX 87
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Mr. And Mrs. Lou Zeller
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
PO BOX 88
Glendale Springs, NC 28629

Mr. James Warren
NC Warn
PO BOX 61051
Durham, NC 27715-1051

Mr. Wells Eddleman
811 Yancey Street
Durham, NC 27701

Allan Cain
100 North Academy Street
Cary, NC 27511

Ms. MaryAnn E. Black, Chairman
Durham County Board of Commissioners
615 Orindo Drive
Durham, NC 27713

Mr. Benjamin J. Luberoff
261 Fearington Post
Pittsboro, NC 27312-8556

Mr. Charlie Horne
County Manager
County of Chatham
P.O. Box 87
Pittsboro, NC 27312-0087

Ms. Liz Cullington
390 Rocky Hills Road
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Rachael D. Elledge
402 Sharon Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Elizabeth Pratson
405 Sharon Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Elaine Chiosso, Executive Director
Haw River Assembly
P.O. Box 187
Bynum, NC 27228

Randal R. and Cathleen C. Morgan
111 LA Killam Court
Cary, NC 27513

Ms. Lois Oldham-Simonson
City Clerk
City of Sanford
P.O. Box 338
Sanford, NC 27331

Representative Verla Insko
1319 Legislative Building
Raleigh, NC 27601

Mr. Trevis B. Averett, Assistant Director
Department of Community Development
City of Sanford
P.O. Box 3729
Sanford, NC 27331

Mr. Keith H. Weatherly, Mayor
P.O. Box 250
Apex, NC 27502

Mr. Michael R. Nelson, Mayor
Town of Carrboro
301 West Main Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

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