

**From:** "Pierce, Chuck R." <CRPIERCE@southernco.com>  
**To:** "Christian Araguas" <CJA2@nrc.gov>  
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**Created By:** CRPIERCE@southernco.com

**Recipients**  
"Christian Araguas" <CJA2@nrc.gov>

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## NUCLEAR NEWS FLASHES - Thursday, August 23, 2007

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### US NEWS:

--REPRIORITIZING NEW PLANT LICENSING APPLICATION REVIEWS might be something the NRC will have to do after the requests are filed, several NRC commissioners indicated at an August 22 briefing. At least three commissioners signaled they might be open to reprioritizing the NRC staff's review schedule in the future to focus first on license requests for projects expected to move forward in the near term. NRC Chairman Dale Klein said the commissioners would revisit the issue if the staff notified them of a "staffing crunch." NRC Commissioner Edward McGaffigan initially raised the issue, questioning whether NRC should be spending resources to license "theoretical plants" rather than "real" plant projects. Commissioner Gregory Jaczko agreed with McGaffigan that the agency was beyond the point of testing the licensing process.

--NRC STAFF HAS NEARLY FINISHED AN "ACCEPTANCE REVIEW" of UniStar Nuclear's partial combined construction permit-operating license, or COL application, for Calvert Cliffs, an NRC senior manager said August 23. The cursory review is performed to determine whether the staff has all the information it needs to begin a technical evaluation. Typically, the staff aims to complete an acceptance review within 30 days of a submittal. UniStar filed the first part of its COL application on July 13. David Matthews, director of NRC's new reactor licensing division, told UniStar in an August 23 letter that its submittal would not be subjected to a more rigorous 60-day review, which the NRC commissioners recently approved, because the staff has not yet published guidance. NRC regulations allow for a COL application to be submitted in two parts, but the staff is struggling to figure out how it will work in practice. At an August 22 briefing, NRC Office of New Reactors Director William Borchardt told the commissioners that the staff plans to "engage" UniStar on how the agency can conduct a "meaningful regulatory review based on information we've yet to see."

--THE NRC REVIEW OF VOGTLE'S EARLY SITE PERMIT WILL TAKE 31 MONTHS rather than the 30-month projected standard schedule, if a hearing is requested and granted, agency staff said. In a letter to Southern Nuclear Operating Co. that was released August 23, NRC staff said the one-month delay was caused by budgeting problems. NRC, like most federal agencies, was operating until February under a "continuing resolution" that funded it at the same level as fiscal 2006. NRC said in the letter that the Vogtle application and all license renewal schedules developed during fiscal 2007, which started October 1, 2006, were impacted. The staff schedule anticipates a commission decision on Southern Nuclear's application in January 2010, if a hearing is granted.

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

--STUDSVIK'S SECOND-QUARTER OPERATING PROFIT WAS DOWN 40.8%, management at the Swedish nuclear services company said in an August 23 financial statement. Profit was 15.8 million kronor (US\$2.3 million) for the quarter, versus 26.7 million kronor for the same period in 2006. Management said the decline was because of costs associated with a bid on a UK nuclear services company.

Studsvik ultimately decided the company was too expensive to continue bidding on. Sales were up, to 345.8 million kronor for second-quarter 2007 from 317.5 million kronor in second-quarter 2006.

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