



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

30-456/437

March 16, 1999

Mr. David Dvorak, Village President
The Village of Essex
P.O. Box 175
Essex, Illinois 60935

SUBJECT: VILLAGE OF ESSEX RESOLUTION NO. 2-99 BRAIDWOOD

Dear Mr. Dvorak:

Thank you for your letter dated February 3, 1999, in which you expressed concern over the sale of certain properties by the Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd). You stated that the sale could present a risk to the health and safety of the residents of the area because of the loss of emergency cooling water for the Braidwood Station. The source of cooling water in question is a series of lakes (strip-mine ponds) located on the properties that are being sold. You stated that ComEd had previously used water from these ponds and may need it in the future to support the safe operation of Braidwood. The concerns were promulgated in the Village of Essex Resolution No. 2-99 that resolved to seek the assistance of Federal and State government agencies to prevent the transfer of these properties.

Braidwood's licensing by the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) does not specify the use of the strip-mine ponds as sources of cooling water. The ultimate heat sink (source of cooling water) for Braidwood is provided by the essential cooling pond--an excavated depression within the main cooling pond. The plant is designed such that with a pond level of at least 590 feet above sea level, the ultimate heat sink provides enough water to cool the essential heat loads of both units for at least 30 days without makeup water under worst-case conditions. The plant's Technical Specifications require ComEd to maintain a pond water level of at least 590 feet or to begin shutdown of the plant. The normal source of makeup water for Braidwood Station's cooling pond is from the Kankakee River. In situations of severe drought, the strip-mine ponds could be used to augment this source and reduce the drain on the Kankakee River; however, the ponds are not needed to safely shut down the plant or to maintain the plant in a safe condition.

In summary, plant safety is ensured by the design of the essential cooling pond and by the water level requirements in Braidwood's Technical Specifications. Therefore, there is no regulatory basis for the NRC to require ComEd to rely on the strip-mine ponds as a supplemental source of cooling water or to maintain ownership of the land as part of the Braidwood Station property.

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Mr. David Dvorak, Village President
 The Village of Essex
 P.O. Box 175
 Essex, Illinois 60935

SUBJECT: TOWNSHIP OF ESSEX RESOLUTION NO. 2-99 BRAIDWOOD

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In summary, plant safety is ensured by the design of the essential cooling pond and by the water level requirements in Braidwood's Technical Specifications. Therefore, there is no regulatory basis for the NRC to require ComEd to rely on the strip-mine ponds as a supplemental source of cooling water or to maintain ownership of the land as part of the Braidwood Station property.

Sincerely,

Samuel J. Collins, Director
 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Braidwood's licensing by the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) does not rely on the strip-mine ponds as sources of cooling water. The ultimate heat sink (source of cooling water) for Braidwood is provided by the essential cooling pond - an excavated depression within the main cooling pond. The plant is designed such that, with a pond level of at least 590 feet above sea level, the ultimate heat sink provides enough water to cool the essential heat loads of both units for at least 30 days without makeup water under worst case conditions. The plant's Technical Specifications require ComEd to maintain a pond water level of at least 590 feet or commence a plant shutdown. The normal source of makeup water for Braidwood Station's cooling pond is from the Kankakee River. In situations of severe drought, the strip-mine ponds could be used to augment this source and reduce the drain on the Kankakee River; however, the ponds are not needed to safely shut down the plant or to maintain the plant in a safe condition.

In summary, plant safety is assured by the design of the essential cooling pond and by the water level requirements in Braidwood's Technical Specifications. Therefore, there is no regulatory basis for the NRC to require Commonwealth Edison Company to rely on the strip-mine ponds as a supplemental source of cooling water or to maintain ownership of the land as part of the Braidwood Nuclear Power Station property.

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 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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March 16, 1999

Mr. David Dvorak

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I wish to thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention, and I hope the information we are providing you is responsive to your concerns.

Sincerely,

ORIG. SIGNED BY
Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. STN 50-456 and STN 50-457

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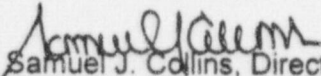
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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