

**Official Transcript of Proceedings**  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

Title: South Texas Project License Renewal  
Public Meeting: Evening Session

Docket Number: (n/a)

Location: Bay City, Texas

Date: Tuesday, January 15, 2013

Work Order No.: NRC-3030

Pages 1-22

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
+ + + + +  
PRELIMINARY SITE-SPECIFIC RESULTS  
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR  
SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT LICENSE RENEWAL

+ + + + +  
PUBLIC MEETING  
EVENING SESSION

+ + + + +  
Tuesday, January 15, 2013

201 7th Street  
Bay City, Texas

7:00 p.m.

ON BEHALF OF THE NRC:

BOB HAGAR, Facilitator

OTHER NRC STAFF:

SUSAN SALTER

TAM TRAN

BINESH THARAKAN

DAVE WRONA

EMILY LARSON

LARA USILING

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(7:02 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. HAGAR: Well, good evening to  
4 everybody, and thanks for coming to this meeting. My  
5 name is Bob Hagar, and with Susan Salter we're going  
6 to facilitate this meeting, and the whole purpose of  
7 our being here is to help the meeting run smoothly, and  
8 we're going make sure that everyone that wants to say  
9 something has an opportunity to say something.

10 Before we get started, I want to remind  
11 everybody that this meeting is being transcribed. We've  
12 got a court reporter over here, and we want everything  
13 that's said in the meeting to be on the transcript, so  
14 please be sure when you have -- if you have something  
15 to say, to speak into a microphone and speak very clearly.

16 And the first time you speak, be sure and  
17 say your name and what organization you're with so we  
18 can get that in the transcript properly.

19 I remind everybody the restrooms are just  
20 outside this hall -- this door, down the hall. The  
21 ladies' restroom is first hallway to the left, and the  
22 men's restroom is down at the end of the hall to the  
23 right. And exits are right here (indicating) and then  
24 out in the hall to the left and to the right.

25 In addition, everybody, if you would please

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1 turn off your electrical devices; at least turn them  
2 on silent mode so that the meeting is not disrupted,  
3 and if you get a call during the meeting, if you would  
4 please step out in the hall so you don't disturb anybody  
5 else in the meeting.

6 Now, the purpose of tonight's meeting is  
7 to present the findings and collect public comments on  
8 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the  
9 proposed renewal of the South Texas Project nuclear power  
10 plant's operating licenses for an additional 20 years.

11 During this meeting you may hear  
12 individuals refer to the Environmental Impact Statement  
13 as the EIS or the Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
14 as the DEIS. Please don't get confused by that.

15 Now, the agenda for the meeting will  
16 include -- we're going to first have a presentation by  
17 the NRC staff, where they'll present the results of the  
18 environmental review, and when that's done, we'll have  
19 an opportunity for questions and answers about the  
20 presentation.

21 So if you have questions about the  
22 presentation as we're going through, I want you to hold  
23 those until we're done, and then we'll have question  
24 and answers. And then after that we'll have an  
25 opportunity for anyone who wants to make a comment to

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1 comment on the record.

2 But if you want to say something, if you  
3 want to have your comments on the record, please first  
4 fill out a yellow comment card. Susan has some over  
5 there on the table; I have some in my pocket. And if  
6 you want to say something and haven't filled out a card,  
7 please raise your hand and we'll bring you one.

8 Okay. I think that's all I want to say  
9 about the ground rules, so I'll turn the meeting over  
10 now to Tam Tran, who's a project manager in the Division  
11 of License Renewal in the NRC's office of Nuclear Reactor  
12 Regulation, and he will do the presentation.

13 MR. TRAN: Thank you.

14 Thank you all for taking the time to come  
15 to this meeting. My name is Tam Tran; I'm the project  
16 manager for the environmental review for the South Texas  
17 Project license renewal.

18 I hope the information today will provide  
19 you with understanding of how we've done the review,  
20 what we -- and the preliminary result of the review,  
21 and hopefully the comment that we collect today will  
22 help us to make the Final Environmental Impact Statement  
23 accurate.

24 If I can have slide number 8, this slide  
25 show important

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1           This slide shows important milestones for  
2 the environmental review process. The highlighted  
3 dates indicate opportunities for public involvement in  
4 the environmental review.

5           The Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
6 for South Texas Project was published on December 5,  
7 2012, and also known as Supplement 48 of the Generic  
8 Environmental Impact Statement, and we are currently  
9 accepting public comments on this document until  
10 February 22, 2013.

11           Today's meeting is being transcribed, and  
12 therefore the comment that we're taking back today will  
13 help us in developing the Final Environmental Impact  
14 Statement starting from the end of the comment period,  
15 and we at this point anticipate that we will publish  
16 the Final Environmental Impact Statement approximately  
17 seven months from the draft document.

18           Slide number 9, please.

19           As described on this slide, the NRC defines  
20 impact levels in three categories: small, moderate,  
21 or large.

22           For example, the operation of South Texas  
23 Project may cause the loss of adult and juvenile fish  
24 at the intake structure. If the loss of fish is so small  
25 that it does not appear to have noticeably altered

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1 population of the species found in the lower Colorado  
2 River, the impact will be small.

3 If losses cause some population to increase  
4 or decrease, then stabilize at a different level, then  
5 the impact would be moderate.

6 If losses at the intake structure cause the  
7 fish population to decline to the point where it cannot  
8 be stabilized and continually declines, then the impact  
9 would be large.

10 For South Texas Project, the impact to  
11 fishery are small.

12 Slide number 10, please.

13 In conducting the review, the environmental  
14 review team from NRC and Pacific Northwest National  
15 Laboratory analyzes various impacts to the environment.

16 The team examined environmental justice, ecology, land  
17 use, regulatory compliance, climate change, et cetera,  
18 for the supplement.

19 Slide number 11, please.

20 This slide lists the site-specific issues  
21 that the staff reviewed for the continuing operation  
22 of South Texas Project during the proposed license  
23 renewal period. Each issue is assigned a level of  
24 environmental impact of small, moderate, or large by  
25 the environmental review team.

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1 In addition, there are two uncategorized  
2 issues. They are environmental justice and  
3 electromagnetic field chronic effects. For  
4 electromagnetic field chronic effect, the staff  
5 considers the Generic EIS findings of uncertain impacts  
6 is still appropriate. This is because -- simply because  
7 there's no scientific consensus on these issues.

8 The staff's preliminary conclusion is that  
9 the site-specific impacts related to license renewal  
10 for South Texas Project are small, except for the impact  
11 of electromagnetic field acute effects that are small  
12 to moderate.

13 Slide number 13, please.

14 The staff also reviewed cumulative impacts  
15 associated with the continued operation of South Texas  
16 Project. For cumulative impacts, the NRC staff looked  
17 at effects on the environment from past, present, and  
18 reasonably foreseeable future of human actions.

19 The impacts include both from the South  
20 Texas Project operations and from other activities near  
21 the South Texas Project site; for example, I think that  
22 we looked at the White Station Energy Center, the Texas  
23 Prairie Wetland Project, climate change, et cetera.

24 Past actions are those related to the  
25 environmental resources at the time of the power plant

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1 licensing and construction. Present actions are those  
2 related to resources at the time of current operations  
3 of the power plant. And future actions are considered  
4 to be those that are reasonably foreseeable through the  
5 end of the plant's operation, including the period of  
6 extended operations.

7 In other words, the cumulative impact  
8 analysis considers potential impacts through the end  
9 of the current license term as well as the 20-year renewal  
10 license term.

11 While the level of impacts due to the direct  
12 and indirect effect associated with the continued  
13 operation of South Texas Project are mostly small, the  
14 staff's preliminary conclusion is that the cumulative  
15 impacts are small to moderate.

16 Slide number 15.

17 A major step in determining whether a  
18 license renewal is reasonable or not is comparing the  
19 likely impacts of continued operation of nuclear power  
20 plants with the likely impacts of alternatives of power  
21 generation.

22 In the draft supplement, the NRC staff  
23 initially considered 18 different alternatives to  
24 license renewal of the South Texas Project. After this  
25 initial consideration, the staff then chose the five

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1 most likely alternatives and analyzed these in depth.

2 Finally the NRC staff considered what would  
3 happen if no action is taken and South Texas Project  
4 shut down at the end of its current license without a  
5 specific replacement alternative. I want to note that  
6 his alternative would not provide power generation  
7 capacity, nor would it meet the need currently met by  
8 South Texas Project.

9 The NRC preliminary conclusion is that  
10 there is no clear environmentally preferred alternative  
11 to license renewal. All alternatives capable of meeting  
12 the needs currently served by South Texas Project entail  
13 impacts greater than or equal to the proposed action  
14 of license renewal.

15 Slide 16, please.

16 This slide identifies me as your primary  
17 point of contact with the NRC for the comments, and it  
18 also identifies where documents related to our review  
19 may be found.

20 The Draft Supplemental EIS is available at  
21 the Bay City Library. Also it's available on the NRC  
22 website listed on this slide.

23 Slide 18.

24 You can submit written comments either  
25 online or via conventional mail. To submit written

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1 comments online, visit the website regulations.gov and  
2 search for docket ID nrc-2010-0375. If you have written  
3 comments today, you may give them to any NRC staff member  
4 today.

5 This concludes my presentation, and I'm  
6 turning the meeting over to the facilitator.

7 MR. HAGAR: All right. Thank you, Tam.

8 Does anyone have any questions for Tam?  
9 Is there anything he covered that you'd like to over  
10 again? If so, just raise your hand and I'll bring a  
11 mic to you.

12 (No response.)

13 MR. HAGAR: All right. I don't see any  
14 hands, so we'll move directly into the comment period.

15 Two people signed up to make comments on the record,  
16 and so Susan Dancer and Eugene Davis, in that order.

17 Susan, if you'll go ahead and come up, you  
18 have an opportunity now to make whatever comments you  
19 want.

20 MS. DANCER: Thank you. My name is Susan  
21 Dancer; common spelling on both words.

22 I want to thank the NRC staff for traveling  
23 all this way and giving us an opportunity to participate  
24 in this process.

25 I'm a Matagorda County native and a business

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1 person here locally and a state-licensed wildlife  
2 rehabilitator. I live on a 65-acre ranch in Blessing,  
3 about eight miles from STP, and I run an animal sanctuary  
4 there as well.

5 I really appreciate the opportunity to come  
6 and be heard during this scoping process. I believe  
7 that accountability, transparency, and the right to  
8 challenge industry are very important and that to  
9 question is every citizen's duty.

10 I have several areas of this EIS that I would  
11 like to fundamentally disagree with and respectfully  
12 ask you to reconsider.

13 I continually see and hear that STP is  
14 lauded as beneficial to local wildlife and habitat, and  
15 that angle is accepted and incorporated into the EIS.

16 This is not what I see as a local citizen and one of  
17 only three licensed wildlife rehabilitators here in our  
18 county.

19 I see a large corporation doing a great job  
20 of showing you and the public the good and  
21 beneficial-to-them part of the picture.

22 In reality, the contract granted by STP to  
23 deal with wildlife issues goes to the lowest bidder,  
24 currently GCA. GCA, as well as previous environmental  
25 contractors, requires its employees to destroy bird

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1 nests, eggs, and infant birds that nest on the site as  
2 part of standard housekeeping.

3 These employees receive no training in  
4 applicable laws such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act,  
5 no training on species identification, and don't even  
6 know what kind of avian life they're destroying.

7 One year ago this week STP initiated a  
8 nuisance-bird eradication program, whereby seed was set  
9 out for several days in a row to establish feeding  
10 stations on site, and then the seed was replaced with  
11 poison.

12 This project was aimed primarily at several  
13 protected species of grackles that congregate in large  
14 numbers to overwinter on the Texas Gulf Coast. The  
15 poisons that are used are neurotoxic, and the animals  
16 that ingest them die a horrible death, often beating  
17 themselves to death on the ground.

18 Predator species such as hawks, eagles, and  
19 owls are drawn to the activity and, by ingesting the  
20 tainted birds, they ingest the poisons as well. These  
21 are biocumulative in the food chain.

22 I got calls about several raptors on and  
23 around the STP site that week that were acting  
24 abnormally. One red-tail hawk was brought to my  
25 facility but could not be saved.

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1 I emailed STP authorities before this  
2 poisoning took place and asked them to consider other  
3 options. They did not reply to my email, which is  
4 attached; I'll leave my comments here.

5 There are much more humane ways to keep the  
6 site free of unwanted birds, short of killing them,  
7 though maybe none so inexpensive. These kinds of  
8 activities must be considered in the scoping process,  
9 and we must acknowledge that fact, that profit supersedes  
10 environmental concerns.

11 STP also regularly deals with mammals on  
12 site with lethal solutions, and when problem animals  
13 are relocated, employees lack the training to recognize  
14 disease which may be infectious, and they are not trained  
15 on the laws that pertain especially to our fur-bearing  
16 species.

17 Our wildlife rehabilitation group has  
18 offered training to STP personnel at no expense but were  
19 told -- and I quote -- "We are not ready to take it to  
20 that level."

21 Additionally, STP regularly kills entire  
22 bee colonies that swarm on site. Honeybee numbers are  
23 in serious decline, and most of our food crops depend  
24 on their pollination.

25 Another aspect of the EIS I think is

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1 understated and not given serious weight: the serious  
2 water shortage facing our region. To assign a small  
3 impact valuation to a shortage of life-giving necessity  
4 is irresponsible. In what will undoubtedly be a new  
5 drought of record, this is premature and presumptuous.

6 Profit and safety are not at the same end  
7 of the business spectrum; they are polar opposites.  
8 It costs money and cuts into profit to be safe. As time  
9 goes on and more and more equipment ages and fails, safety  
10 and concern for community must be sacrificed if  
11 shareholders are to be kept satisfied.

12 STPNOC's only objective is to make money  
13 for their owners. The appearance and grand gestures  
14 toward community and safety are an important part of  
15 that process, but the actual implementation of the same  
16 is counterproductive to the process of making money,

17 For example, STP has long been a top  
18 producer in the nuclear industry in both profit and  
19 output; however, when forced outages in Unit 2 caused  
20 the profitability to fall, the new management sent nearly  
21 300 people, 25 percent of STP's workforce, home without  
22 pay days before Thanksgiving, and they were unpaid  
23 through the end of the year.

24 Where was the professed concern for family  
25 and employees and community then? Taking a backseat

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1 to profit, as they always will, and even more so as the  
2 plant ages and reasonable maintenance is neglected in  
3 the interest of cost savings.

4 Today's corporate world demands lean,  
5 efficient operation. A process of trial and error  
6 establishes how lean a company can be and still profit.

7 The workforce is ever more and more comprised of  
8 contract workers with lower wages and no benefits.

9 One might argue that's just business, and I  
10 completely agree. However, framed by the reason that  
11 we are here, to discuss STP's environmental impact,  
12 including the socioeconomic indicators, on our  
13 community, we must consider all the factors fully and  
14 realistically in the final EIS.

15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. HAGAR: Thank you, Susan.

17 Eugene Davis, if you have anything to say,  
18 please step up.

19 MR. DAVIS: I'm Eugene Davis. I'm the  
20 executive director of the Matagorda County Women's  
21 Crisis Center, known as The Crisis Center. And I'd like  
22 to speak, quite briefly, on four points.

23 One is that what I have observed and seen  
24 and heard is that STP has an excellent safety record.

25 It seeks to be transparent; it seeks to let people know

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1 when things are going on and seeks to be proactive, from  
2 my point of view.

3 I believe, from my point of view, that STP  
4 has the safety of everyone at stake and is one of the  
5 best-run plants as far as safety and energy in the US.

6 And with that, I think that's the second  
7 point, is the efficiency, that we do have an excellent  
8 run plant. As my predecessor made the comment just a  
9 moment ago about what happened with the contract workers,  
10 we are in a unique situation where STP is, because of  
11 the price of natural gas, losing money, and as in any  
12 household, if you spend more than you make, you go under,  
13 so there's that need to conserve resources.

14 Also, I cannot comment about what my  
15 predecessor has said about the environment on plant site.

16 However, I know that with safety being what it is and  
17 the need for safety, they are taking that as the most  
18 important course.

19 I look at the overall impact, county- and  
20 area-wide. Every year Matagorda County is rated number  
21 one in migratory bird population in different species.

22 That tells me, with STP having been here for 30 years,  
23 that environmentally they have had a minimal, at best,  
24 impact upon this area. Otherwise we would not see that  
25 kind of wildlife still in the region across this area.

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1           And then, too, finally, is the fact that  
2           STP is, in my view, an excellent corporate citizen,  
3           always willing to step in, always willing to make the  
4           difference, always willing to help, and has instilled  
5           that in all its employees, that their employees are also  
6           involved in the community. And they are a vital part  
7           of this community that we really appreciate and want  
8           to see them stay.

9           Again, I believe in our current energy  
10          situation across the state of Texas and electrical  
11          generation, Texas as a whole needs STP.

12          Thank you very much.

13          MR. HAGAR: All right. Thank you, Mr.  
14          Davis.

15          And then there was one other speaker that  
16          didn't sign up but indicated she might want to make a  
17          few comments. Karen, do you want to say something  
18          tonight?

19          MS. HADDEN: Briefly.

20          MR. HAGAR: Okay. Please introduce  
21          yourself when you get up here.

22          MS. HADDEN: Good evening. I'm Karen  
23          Hadden, and I am the director of the SEED Coalition,  
24          Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Coalition,  
25          and I will add to the comments that I made at the earlier

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1 session today, largely in response to some of the other  
2 comments that have been made here tonight.

3 And I wish I could say that I shared the  
4 opinion of transparency for South Texas Project. I find  
5 it to be of concern that information is not more  
6 forthcoming.

7 And in terms of safety, I'm very concerned  
8 about the cutting of employees. I think that's a way  
9 to increase safety risks. And even though there's been  
10 luck so far, I have great concerns, as do many others  
11 who are not here tonight -- and I'll go ahead and say  
12 that I'm speaking for many other people as well -- that  
13 while we have so far no major accident at the site, there  
14 needs to be research in the amount of radiation,  
15 radionuclides migrating off the site.

16 And also we need to prepare, because  
17 historically at some of the sites that were touted as  
18 being the safest, the most productive, the ones that  
19 were running beautifully, that is exactly where the major  
20 problems have occurred in US nuclear history.

21 And I think we should be looking carefully.

22 I think we should be more forthcoming with information,  
23 digging into recent events such as the fire that  
24 occurred; digging deeper on many issues and looking more  
25 closely.

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1 Thank you.

2 MR. HAGAR: All right. Is there anyone  
3 else that wants to make any comments tonight on the  
4 record?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. HAGAR: Then let me kind of wrap this  
7 up by reminding everybody that the NRC wants to continue  
8 to improve the way we present public meetings, and so  
9 there are some feedback forms on the corner of the table,  
10 and if you have a mind to, grab a feedback form on the  
11 way out and suggest to us on how we can improve these  
12 meetings.

13 And for a final few words, I want to turn  
14 this meeting over to Dave Wrona, who's Branch Chief in  
15 the Division of License Renewal in headquarters' Office  
16 of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

17 Dave.

18 MR. WRONA: Thank you, Bob.

19 Just to wrap things up, I want to thank  
20 everybody. The turnout tonight, we have a lot of  
21 duplicate attendance in the crowd, so we did abbreviate  
22 our presentation, hitting the high points.

23 I just want to let everybody know that the  
24 NRC staff will be hanging around after the meeting for  
25 a little bit, especially as we clean up. So if anybody

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1 has any specifics on our analysis and our Draft  
2 Environmental Impact Statement, they can stop and see  
3 any one of us, and we can go into a little bit more detail.

4 And in general, too, if you have any  
5 questions on the NRC and what we do and how we function,  
6 you know, we'll be here to be able to answer those  
7 questions.

8 I do thank you for taking the time out of  
9 your busy schedules to come and provide us with comments  
10 that we'll use when we develop our Final Environmental  
11 Impact Statement, as Tam mentioned, to be -- it's  
12 expected to be published around the July 2013 time frame.

13 And just as a reminder, as Tam has up on  
14 the screen, this isn't the only forum to provide the  
15 public comments to us that you have. Regulations.gov  
16 will allow you to go online and provide them to us, or  
17 you can mail them in to the address that's shown on the  
18 screen, and that information is available in the handout.

19 So if you haven't take a set of the handouts, those  
20 are still available over at the table.

21 Thank you very much.

22 MR. HAGAR: With that, this meeting is  
23 adjourned. Thank you for being here.

24 (Whereupon, at 7:28 p.m., the hearing was  
25 concluded.)

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