

Re-Licensing Update

May 20, 2006

On April 25, 2006 Alcoa Power Generating Inc. submitted a license application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The Application asks for a new 50 year license.

The Application proposes High Rock Lake be operated with a "Hard Guide" that allows Alcoa to draw down the lake to six (6) feet below full between April 1 and October 30, and to go down to 12 feet below full from the 1st of December until the end of February. March and November would be transition periods. In addition, Alcoa has proposed a "Soft Guide" that would increase lake levels between April 15 and September 15, rising to no lower than 2.5 feet below full between June 15 . and July 15. [Click here for the text of the Application.....](#)

The HRLA is very disturbed that Alcoa would propose operating guides that closely mirror historic operation, and ignore all the valid reasons for operating High Rock with the same concern for stable water levels that are used at Tuckertown, Badin, and Falls Lakes. Alcoa's proposed "**Restriction**" on generation of 1,500 cubic ft. per second when they pull the lake below the "Soft Curve" is hardly a hardship. This equates to operation of the turbines in all 4 lakes an average of 8,400 cfs 6 hours daily, 5 days per week; capitalizing heavily on the lucrative peak pricing window of opportunity. That's why the HRLA strongly opposes the "soft curve" concept, as we believe Alcoa would go right down to absolute minimums as it has demonstrated in the past.

Alcoa wants to retain the authority to deplete water in High Rock at its discretion to insure maximum corporate profits. We are not against profits, but we believe it is a good trade-off to the community and the environment to ask Alcoa to forego a couple of percentage points on its profit margin to provide high, stable water levels with better water quality in High Rock Lake.

All the studies done by Alcoa during the relicensing process have shown very positive benefits can be obtained by operating High Rock Lake with stable water levels year round. This includes positive environmental effects, positive economic impacts, increased recreational opportunity; and positive benefits to the region downstream of the dams.

We are hugely disappointed that the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (NCDENR) has failed to endorse a meaningful change in the way High Rock Lake should be operated. We suggest you write Secretary Ross at NCDENR and let him know that the citizens of this region want High Rock Lake operated with stable water levels, and we are suggesting a target level of no lower than 2.5 ft. below full at least 9 months of the year. Send your letters to:

Mr. William G. Ross, Jr., Secretary
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
1601 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

NCDENR will play a very important role in the approval of Alcoa's federal license. When filing its comments on the proposed License Application, NCDENR's Water Resource Division promoted higher downstream releases without concern for the effect this will have on High Rock Lake levels. Please let Secretary Ross know how you feel about this.

The HRLA continues to participate in negotiations with Alcoa and other stakeholders that could have a meaningful effect on the Application Alcoa has filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Alcoa advised FERC that any negotiated settlement agreements will be submitted to FERC by the end of 2006 with the request to modify the Application accordingly. Achieving our goals for High Rock Lake requires the interest and participation in the Relicensing Process by the general public; by Local, State, and Federal Elected Representatives; and the cooperation of various governmental bodies and agencies. Please let all your representatives at Local, State, and Federal levels know this is a very important issue, and prevail upon them to demand Alcoa change the terms of its Application to reflect needed changes in the way High Rock Lake is operated.

The Future of High Rock Lake depends upon your actions !!