



For Immediate Release  
July 27, 2015

Contacts:

Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, 215 369 1188 ext 102 (rings office & cell)  
Jeff Tittel, Director, NJ Sierra Club, 609-558-9100  
David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action, (732) 996-4288  
Doug O'Malley, Director, Environment New Jersey, 917 449 6812

## **NJDEP Tells 3 Billion Fish to “Drop Dead” While It Denies Request for Comment Extension to Challenge**

**Trenton, NJ:** New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection denied a request by 13 conservation and fish organizations and over 600 individuals (so far) to extend the time to comment on a draft Clean Water Act Permit issued for the Salem Nuclear Generating Station. The Draft Permit, which took the state nine years to draft and was finalized and released in response to a legal action brought by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Clean Water Action and New Jersey Sierra Club, allows the facility to continue with the once through cooling system that kills over 3 billion Delaware River fish a year. The comment period spans the two highest vacation months of the year, July and August and ends on September 4, just before labor day weekend.

“PSEG’s Salem Generating Station kills over 3 billion fish a year. The fish kills at this facility and the political dealmaking that has allowed it to continue for over 40 years has made Salem one of the most contentious issues in New Jersey, and one that has received national focus because of the dangerous precedent DEP has allowed this facility to set. After administratively extending PSEG’s expired permit for 9 years and forcing us to sue the State to secure this draft permit to comment upon, the NJDEP and the Christie administration continue their abuse of power by ignoring the public’s request for fair time and fair hearings to be able to review and comment. Sixty days and one hearing during the height of vacation season is an intentional effort to deny us the ability to fully and

fairly comment. The only reason to do this is because Governor Christie and Commissioner Martin know their permit is a raw deal for the people of New Jersey that will allow the needless fish slaughter to continue, unabated," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper**.

"This is part of DEP's arrogance and abuse of power. They would rather side with PSEG than the public's right to comment on these permits. They don't want the public to know about what's happening here and they don't want the public to come out and oppose it. We went to court to get updated permits with proper cooling towers and the DEP just renewed the same old permits that will allow more fish to be killed. People are outraged at the continued fish kills and environmental damage that these permits will allow and demanded the right to speak up. The DEP does not care if 3 billion fish a year get killed or superheated water pollutes the bay. They're on the side of PSEG not the people or the environment," said **Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club**. "We went to court to get updated permits with proper cooling towers and the DEP just renewed the same old permits that will allow more fish to be killed. We need people to go to these hearings and make comments on this to let the DEP know how wrong their actions regarding the Salem power plants have been."

"NJDEP is happy to try to sweep the state's largest fish killer under the rug by shutting out the public," said **Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey**. "We've waited nine years to weigh in on Salem's out-dated cooling technology, and DEP wants to hold 1 public hearing for fish kills that affect the entire Delaware Bayshore. This is a raw deal for the public."

The draft permit was issued June 9; the 60 day comment period ends September 4. The permit was issued as the result of a settlement agreement resolving a legal action initiated October 2013, by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, New Jersey Sierra Club and Clean Water Action. The legal action challenged the NJDEP's failure to take action on PSE&G's permit renewal application for the Salem Nuclear Generating Station located in Lower Alloways Creek Township, New Jersey. PSE&G submitted its renewal application for a New Jersey Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES) permit in February 2006, but NJDEP never made a determination on the application either by issuing a draft permit for public notice and comment, or by denying the permit, until forced by the legal settlement.

Among other things, the draft permit issued allows the facility to draw a monthly average of 3.024 billion gallons per day of water for a once through cooling system and grants the facility a variance from thermal limits.

#####