



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS TO DISCUSS NEW ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION ON PROPOSED MOX NUCLEAR FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold public meetings September 17-19, in South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina to discuss environmental impacts of the proposed Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility contained in a report by the Department of Energy's contractor, Duke Cogema Stone & Webster (DCS).

The DOE is proposing to construct the MOX facility at its Savannah River site near Aiken, South Carolina. If NRC grants the license, DCS could build a MOX facility that would convert surplus weapons-grade plutonium, supplied by the Department of Energy, into fuel for use in a limited number of commercial nuclear power reactors. Commercial nuclear power plants in the United States currently use only uranium as fuel; the mixed oxide fuel would be a combination of uranium and plutonium. There would be no reprocessing or subsequent reuse of the spent fuel. Converting weapons-grade plutonium into MOX fuel helps advance the cause of nonproliferation by converting the material into a form unsuitable for use in weapons.

The DOE announced in January that it would not build and operate the Plutonium Immobilization Plant as part of its hybrid approach for surplus weapons plutonium disposition. Instead, DOE decided that 34 metric tons of surplus weapons plutonium would be converted to MOX fuel at the proposed MOX facility. This decision resulted in design changes to the proposed facility, which affect the scope of NRC's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and required DCS to submit a revised environmental report for NRC review. The revised environmental report will be discussed at the public meetings.

The September 17 meeting will be held at the North Augusta Community Center, located at 495 Brookside Avenue, North Augusta, South Carolina; the September 18 meeting will be held at the Coastal Georgia Center, located at 305 Fahm Street, Savannah, Georgia; and the September 19 meeting will be held at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, located at 600 E. Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina. All three meetings will be held from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. and will include an opportunity for the NRC staff to address questions and comments from the public.

Information on the revised environmental report and other documents associated with the proposed MOX project are available through the NRC's MOX web page at <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html>. Documents may also be obtained by contacting NRC's Public Document Room at 301-415-4737 or 1-800-397-4209.

For general information on the environmental review process, contact Tim Harris at 301-415-6613. For technical information associated with the proposed MOX facility, contact Tim Johnson at 301-415-7299 or Drew Persinko at 301-415-6522.

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