



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, DC 20555-001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>

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NRC ANNOUNCES OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING ON PROPOSED MIXED OXIDE FUEL FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has announced an opportunity for interested persons to request a hearing on the proposed mixed oxide (MOX) fuel facility to be located on the Department of Energy's Savannah River site near Aiken, South Carolina. The agency recently received a construction authorization request for the facility.

Requests for a hearing should be submitted by May 18. A Federal Register notice published today provides details on how to submit the requests.

The Department of Energy is proposing to construct a MOX fuel plant through a contract with the consortium of Duke Engineering & Services, COGEMA Inc., and Stone & Webster (known as DCS). 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 reactors. Such use would render the plutonium essentially inaccessible and unattractive for weapons use. Commercial nuclear power plants currently use uranium as fuel; the mixed oxide fuel would be a combination of uranium and plutonium.

A notice announcing receipt of the construction authorization request and the related environmental report was published in the Federal Register on March 7.

Scoping meetings, which were announced separately, are being held this week in the vicinity of the proposed plant to invite public comment on the scope, or bounds, of the environmental impact statement.

Interested individuals who wish to participate as a party in the hearing may file a written request by May 18 to the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications staff.

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