



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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 SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON GRAND GULF EARLY SITE PERMIT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS; MEETING TO BE HELD JUNE 28

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on its preliminary conclusion that environmental impacts would not prevent issuing an Early Site Permit (ESP) for the Grand Gulf site, about 25 miles south of Vicksburg, Miss.

The preliminary conclusion is contained in NUREG-1817, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an Early Site Permit at the Grand Gulf ESP Site." The draft EIS is open for public comment until July 14, and will also be the subject of a public meeting June 28 in Port Gibson, Miss.

The ESP process allows an applicant to address site-related issues, such as environmental impacts, for possible future construction and operation of a nuclear power plant at the site. The Grand Gulf ESP application was filed Oct. 21, 2003, by System Energy Resources Inc. (SERI), a subsidiary of Entergy Nuclear. If approved, the permit would give SERI up to 20 years to decide whether to build a new nuclear unit on the site and to file an application with the NRC for approval to begin construction.

The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that a permit should be issued. The staff's conclusion is based on its independent review of a report submitted by SERI, taking into account consultations with federal, state, tribal and local agencies and consideration of comments received during the public scoping process. The staff's preliminary conclusions include a finding that there are no environmentally preferable or obviously superior sites.

On Tuesday, June 28, the NRC staff will hold a meeting to obtain comments on the draft EIS in the Port Gibson City Hall, at 1005 College Street in Port Gibson. The meeting, which will be transcribed, begins at 7:00 p.m. and will conclude by 10:00 p.m. In addition, the NRC staff will host an informal discussion one hour prior to the meeting. NRC staff members will answer questions and explain the ESP process during this informal session, but "official comments" on the EIS must be made during the meeting.

For planning purposes, anyone interested in attending or presenting oral comments at the June 28 meeting is encouraged to pre-register no later than June 21, by contacting Cristina Guerrero of the NRC by telephone at (800) 368-5642, extension 3835, or by e-mail at GrandGulfEIS@nrc.gov. Interested persons may also register to speak within 15 minutes of the start of the meeting. Time for individual comments at the meetings may be limited to accommodate all speakers. People requesting special accommodations to attend or present information at the meeting should contact the NRC by

June 21 so the requests can be properly reviewed. A separate press release with more details will be issued closer to the meeting date.

Written comments on the draft EIS will also be considered by NRC staff. Comments should be submitted either by mail (postmarked by July 14, 2005) to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail (sent no later than July 14, 2005) at GrandGulfEIS@nrc.gov .

The draft EIS and related documents are available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md. They are also available on the NRC's Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1817/index.html> . In addition, the Harriette Person Memorial Library, located at 606 Main St., Port Gibson, Miss., has agreed to make the draft EIS available for public inspection.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on July 14, 2005, the NRC staff will consider and address all comments received. The NRC expects to issue a final EIS on the environmental acceptability of an ESP at Grand Gulf by the end of 2005. The NRC issued a draft Safety Evaluation Report (SER) on the Grand Gulf site on April 7, as described in a press release on the agency's Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2005/05-063.pdf> .

Before the Commission can reach a final decision on issuing the permit, the NRC staff must still complete the EIS and SER, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards must issue a report on the ESP application, and the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel must conduct its mandatory hearing on the matter. The NRC expects to finish this process late in 2006.

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