



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON PROPOSED ENRICHMENT PLANT IN OHIO, ANNOUNCES PUBLIC MEETING

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued its draft environmental impact statement on a proposed gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant in Piketon, Ohio, concluding there would be small to moderate impacts on traffic, air pollution and the local economy.

NRC staff will hold a public meeting Sept. 29 at the Vern Riffe Career Technology Center, 175 Beaver Creek Rd., in Piketon, to discuss the findings and receive written and oral public comments. The meeting will run from 7 p.m. to 9:45 p.m., and a transcription will subsequently be posted on the NRC Web site. NRC staff members will be available for informal discussion an hour before the meeting.

USEC Inc. submitted its application to construct and operate the American Centrifuge Plant in August 2004. The plant would be located on land leased from the U.S. Department of Energy at DOE's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant site in Piketon.

The draft environmental impact statement categorizes potential impacts of the plant in three ways: "Small" impacts are not detectable or are so minor that they would neither destabilize nor noticeably alter the environment. "Moderate" impacts are sufficient to noticeably alter but not destabilize a resource, while "large" impacts are clearly noticeable and sufficient to destabilize a resource.

The draft study describes small-to-moderate socioeconomic impacts of the proposed plant. Specifically, an estimated 3,362 full-time jobs would be created in the area from 2006 to 2010 as a result of plant construction. During operation from 2010 to 2040, about 1,500 jobs would be created in the Piketon area. The study also notes moderate socioeconomic impacts to Paducah, Ky., where USEC is expected to terminate operations at its gaseous diffusion enrichment plant once the Piketon centrifuge plant begins production.

The draft study also notes small-to-moderate impacts on traffic along the two main roads in the Piketon area, especially during construction of the centrifuge plant. Air quality may also be affected by dust and other particulate matter kicked up in an area that already sees similar impacts from agriculture. Impacts on geology, water resources, noise and public occupational health and safety, among others, are also discussed.

The draft environmental impact statement is available for public viewing and comment on the NRC's Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1834/> . Public comments will be accepted through Oct. 24. Comments may be submitted to the Chief, Rules Review and Directives Branch, Mail Stop T6-D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; or by e-mail at NRCREP@nrc.gov, or by fax to (301) 415-5397, attention Matthew Blevins. Comments should note Docket No. 70-7004.

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