



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. I-08-014

March 25, 2008

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HEARING REGARDING PILGRIM PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10 IN PLYMOUTH, MASS.

A three-judge panel will conduct an evidentiary hearing on Thursday, April 10, on an issue raised by an environmental group with regard to a 20-year license extension sought for the Pilgrim nuclear power plant. The hearing will be held at the Radisson Hotel, at 180 Water St. in Plymouth, Mass., beginning at 9 a.m.

Led by Chairman Ann Marshall Young, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) panel assigned to the proceeding will conduct the hearing, which will involve the lawyers for the parties and expert witnesses addressing questions from the judges regarding the issue. The contention to be examined has to do with whether the Plymouth plant's aging management program is adequate with regard to buried pipes and tanks that contain radioactively contaminated water since it does not provide for monitoring wells that would detect leakage.

Members of the public will be able to observe the sessions but will not be allowed to participate. In the event matters at issue involve the discussion of proprietary information, portions of the hearing may be closed to the public.

In conjunction with the evidentiary hearing, the ASLB panel will entertain oral limited appearance statements from members of the public in connection with the proceeding on the evening of Wednesday, April 9. At the session, scheduled for 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Radisson in Plymouth, interested citizens will have an opportunity to make brief statements, of 5 minutes or less, on matters of concern related to the hearing. Although these statements would not constitute testimony or evidence, they nonetheless may assist the ASLB panel and/or the parties in their consideration of the issues.

Members of the public are advised that security measures may be employed at the April 9 and 10 proceedings, including the search of hand-carried items such as briefcases, backpacks and packages at the entrance to the meeting location. Further, NRC procedures prohibit the use of

banners, posters and displays at NRC adjudicatory proceedings, although signs no larger than 18 inches by 18 inches will be permitted at the limited appearance session only, provided they are not waved, attached to sticks, held up or moved about in the room.

Entergy, which operates the Pilgrim plant, submitted an application to the NRC in January 2006 seeking a 20-year renewal of the Plymouth facility's current 40-year operating license. The plant's current license is set to expire on June 8, 2012.

Subsequently, the State of Massachusetts and an environmental group, Pilgrim Watch, filed requests for hearings on the application, as permitted under NRC regulations. The state's request was eventually turned down, but Pilgrim Watch had two contentions admitted. One of the contentions dealt with the adequacy of the plant's aging management program with regard to buried pipes and tanks that contain radioactively contaminated water. The other contention questioned whether the Severe Accident Mitigation Alternatives (SAMAs) developed by Entergy as part of its application are deficient.

In a ruling issued on Oct. 30, 2007, the ASLB panel granted a motion by Entergy to dismiss the contention on the SAMAs. Judge Young filed a dissenting opinion on that decision. However, a motion by Entergy to dismiss the aging management contention was not granted by the ASLB panel, which issued a ruling against it on Oct. 17, 2007. That contention will be the subject of the evidentiary hearing on April 10.

Written requests to make an oral statement at the April 9 session should be submitted by 5 p.m. on April 4 via mail to: Office of the Secretary, Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001; by fax to: (301) 415-1101 (verification at (301) 415-1966); or via e-mail to: hearingdocket@nrc.gov. A copy of the request should also be sent via mail to: Administrative Judge Ann Marshall Young, c/o Johanna Thibault, Esq., Law Clerk, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, Mail Stop T-3 A2A, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001; via fax to: (301) 415-5599 (verification at (301) 415-6094); or via e-mail to: Johanna.Thibault@nrc.gov.

More information about the Pilgrim license renewal application is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/pilgrim.html>, and in the agency's electronic hearing docket, where documents from the ASLB proceeding on Pilgrim may be found by going to http://ehd.nrc.gov/EHD_Proceeding/home.asp and then clicking on the "Pilgrim_50-293-LR" proceeding.

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