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NRC ISSUES FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR VOGTLE EARLY SITE PERMIT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued its final environmental impact statement (EIS) on the proposed Early Site Permit (ESP) for the Vogtle site, about 26 miles southeast of Augusta, Ga. The report contains the NRC's finding that there are no environmental impacts that would prevent issuing the ESP.

The report, NUREG-1872, "Final Environmental Impact Statement for an Early Site Permit at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant Site," is available on the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1872/index.html>. The staff bases its conclusion on its thorough, independent review of an environmental report from the applicant, Southern Nuclear Operating Co. The EIS takes into account consultations with federal, state, tribal and local agencies and consideration of comments received during the public scoping process.

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. Southern Nuclear filed the Vogtle application Aug. 15, 2006. Southern Nuclear has also applied for a Combined License to build and operate two AP1000 reactors on the site described in the ESP application.

The NRC staff's technical review of the ESP application will also include a safety evaluation report. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board must also conclude a hearing on the Vogtle ESP application before the agency's final decision, which is currently expected by late 2009.

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