



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 08-233

December 23, 2008

NRC RECERTIFIES TWO GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANTS OPERATED BY UNITED STATES ENRICHMENT CORPORATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has recertified two gaseous diffusion plants (GDPs) operated by the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC).

The recertifications, valid until Dec. 31, 2013, allow USEC to continue operating the plants near Paducah, Ky., and Portsmouth, Ohio. The recertifications are required under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (AEA), as amended by the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which created USEC. The certifications establish that the plants are in compliance with safety, safeguards and security regulations established by the NRC for these facilities. USEC applied for the recertifications in April.

On Dec. 17, the NRC issued a report to Congress on the operation of the GDPs, covering the period from Oct. 1, 2003, to Sept. 30, 2008. The report is required by the AEA no later than the date on which a certification is issued. The certifications were issued Dec. 22.

During the five years covered by the report, the Paducah and Portsmouth GDPs have provided adequate protection of health, safety, safeguards, security, and environmental conditions, and have generally operated in compliance with NRC regulations. Offsite radiological doses, and doses to workers, have been very low and well within regulatory limits. The Paducah GDP activated its emergency response system only once in this period, on Sept. 14, 2008, when high winds and storms caused damage to some site structures. There were no radiological impacts. There have been no events resulting in significant releases of radioactive material at either site. NRC inspections during the five-year period, as well as licensee performance reviews conducted at Paducah in 2007 and at Portsmouth in 2008, found USEC's performance acceptable.

USEC terminated enrichment operations at the Portsmouth GDP in 2001 and currently maintains the facility in a standby condition under contract to the Department of

Energy. In May 2007, the NRC issued USEC a license to construct a gas centrifuge enrichment plant at the Portsmouth site.

The report to Congress will be available through the NRC's ADAMS document retrieval system, at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>, using the search term ML083400472. The letter transmitting the report to Congress will be available using ML083400468 as the search term.

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