



# NRC NEWS

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## **NRC FINDS NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS FROM PROPOSED URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT IN IDAHO**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has concluded that there are no significant environmental impacts that would preclude licensing a proposed uranium enrichment facility in Bonneville County, Idaho.

In its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Eagle Rock Enrichment Facility, the NRC staff said environmental impacts from the facility would be generally small, and recommended issuing the license. The staff published the results of its technical review of the application in a Safety Evaluation Report issued in September. That report concluded that operation of the facility as proposed would not pose undue risk to worker and public health and safety.

AREVA Enrichment Services (AES) submitted an application to construct and operate the facility on Dec. 30, 2008. The facility would use gas centrifuge technology to enrich uranium hexafluoride up to 5 percent in the isotope uranium-235. The enriched uranium would be used to manufacture nuclear fuel for commercial nuclear power reactors.

In the FEIS, the NRC staff assessed the potential environmental impacts from preconstruction activities, construction, operation and eventual decommissioning of the proposed facility. The staff assessed the impacts on land use, historic and cultural resources, visual and scenic resources, air quality, geology and soils, water resources, ecological resources, noise, transportation, public and occupational health, waste management, socioeconomics, and environmental justice. The staff also considered public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was published in July 2010.

The NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board is conducting an adjudicatory hearing on the staff's safety review of the application. A hearing on the environmental review is expected to be held this summer. An agency decision on whether to grant a license can only occur after the hearings are concluded.

The FEIS is available on the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1945/>. A copy will be available at the Idaho Falls Public Library, 457 West Broadway, in Idaho Falls. A notice of publication will be published soon in the *Federal Register*. The September 2010 Safety Evaluation Report is available at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1951/>. More information about the application and the NRC's review process is available at <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/arevanc.html>.

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