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ASLB to Hear Arguments on Nuclear Units under Construction in Georgia

A three-judge Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has scheduled oral arguments for March 15 in Augusta on a petition related to a license amendment for Vogtle Units 3 and 4, two nuclear reactors currently under construction near Waynesboro.

The two new Vogtle units are being built by Southern Nuclear Operating Co. at the same site where the company currently operates Units 1 and 2.

The ASLB is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's independent body that conducts adjudicatory hearings and decides legal challenges to the agency's licensing and enforcement actions.

The oral argument session in Augusta is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on March 15 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Federal Justice Center, Plaza Building, 600 James Brown Boulevard. Only designated representatives of the petitioner (Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and its chapter, Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff), Southern Nuclear and the NRC staff will be permitted to present oral argument to the three judges.

The petition opposes the license amendment granted by the NRC in December that changes concrete wall tolerances for the two new Vogtle units. The petition contends that the granting of the amendment does not meet industry standards, does not meet worker radiation protection standards and has a disproportionate impact on Shell Bluff residents near the site.

The public is welcome to attend, but space is limited and only the designated parties will be allowed to speak. No signs or other forms of demonstration are permitted in the courtroom and people wishing to attend should contact the ASLB's Cooper Strickland at 301-415-5880 or Cooper.Strickland@nrc.gov by March 9 to provide their names for security purposes. Anyone attending is urged to arrive at least 15 minutes early to pass through security and should have a valid photo ID. In addition, no mobile phones are permitted in the Federal Justice Center.

A transcript of the arguments will be publicly available sometime after the session is completed.