



NRC NEWS

**U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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NRC TO MEET WITH PUBLIC TO DISCUSS STORAGE OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL AT DIABLO CANYON

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with the public on Tuesday, March 20, to discuss the licensing and regulatory program that will govern plans to construct and operate a dry cask storage facility for spent nuclear fuel at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant near Avila Beach, Calif.

The meeting will be at the San Luis Obispo Public Library, 995 Palm Street, from 6 - 10 p.m. The evening will begin with an "open house" at 6 p.m. at which the public can meet with NRC officials informally. At 7 p.m. the NRC will make a brief presentation. The agency also has invited representatives from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. to provide an overview of the planned facility, and the San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building to discuss its environmental review process. These presentations will be followed by a public question and comment period.

NRC officials will be available for press interviews from 6 - 7 p.m., or after the meeting, which is expected to conclude no later than 10 p.m.

Spent nuclear fuel is the waste left when the fissionable uranium atoms in nuclear fuel have split to generate the intense heat that makes nuclear reactors possible. The waste is in the form of small ceramic pellets stacked inside long, cylindrical metal tubes called fuel rods. The rods are assembled in bundles containing as many as 256 rods each.

Spent fuel at Diablo Canyon is currently stored under water in spent fuel pools. However, spent fuel pool storage capacity is limited, and plant managers are seeking permission to move some of the spent fuel into an independent, dry storage facility consisting of large steel and concrete containers. Dry cask storage is intended to be a temporary storage solution pending construction of a permanent repository, which is the responsibility of the Department of Energy. DOE is investigating the suitability of a site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for construction of the permanent repository.

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