



# NRC NEWS

## U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 01-046

April 24, 2001

### **NRC WILL HOLD PUBLIC MEETING IN CHARLOTTE ON ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR PROPOSED MIXED OXIDE FUEL FACILITY**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public meeting on May 8 in Charlotte, North Carolina, to obtain comments on what should be included in an environmental impact statement that the agency will prepare on a proposed mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility.

The Department of Energy is proposing to construct a facility on its Savannah River site near Aiken, South Carolina, through a contract with a consortium of Duke Engineering & Services, COGEMA Inc., and Stone & Webster (together known as DCS).

The meeting will be held at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, 600 E. Fourth Street, in Charlotte. An open house will start at 6 p.m., followed by the meeting, from 7 to 10 p.m. The agency recently held two other such "scoping" meetings in North Augusta, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, on April 17 and 18, respectively.

If the NRC grants the license, DCS could build a MOX facility that would convert surplus weapons-grade plutonium, supplied by the Department of Energy, into fuel for use in a limited number of commercial nuclear reactors. Such use would render the plutonium essentially inaccessible and unattractive for weapons use. Commercial nuclear power plants currently use uranium as fuel; the mixed oxide fuel would be a combination of uranium and plutonium.

DCS submitted an environmental report on the proposed MOX facility last December, and requested authorization to construct the facility in February. Before deciding whether to authorize construction, the NRC will prepare an environmental impact statement and will conduct a safety evaluation of the application to determine whether it meets NRC requirements.

As previously announced, the NRC is offering an opportunity for interested persons to request a hearing on the proposed facility. Such requests should be submitted by May 18 and follow the submission requirements set out in a Federal Register notice published on April 18.

To obtain information about the May 8 meeting, or to provide comments or suggestions on the scope of the environmental impact statement, interested parties should contact Tim Harris, at 301-415-6613, or Betty Garrett at 301-415-5808.

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