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Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

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E-mail: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct two public meetings on Tuesday, Nov. 1, on the environmental review related to the license renewal application for the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station. Members of the public are invited to attend and comment on environmental issues they believe the NRC should consider during its review of the applicant's proposal to extend by 20 years the operating license for the plant, located in Lacey Township (Ocean County), N.J., and operated by AmerGen.

There will be two sessions held that day at the Quality Inn at 815 Route 37 in Toms River, N.J. The first session will begin at 1:30 p.m. and continue until 4:30 p.m. The second session, which will follow the same format as the first meeting, will get under way at 7 p.m. and continue until 10 p.m. The NRC will host an "open house" beginning 1 hour before the start of each meeting to provide members of the public with an opportunity to talk informally with agency staff. However, formal comments must be expressed during the transcribed meetings.

Both sessions will start with an overview and an NRC staff presentation on the environmental review process for license renewal applications. After the NRC presentation, members of the public will be given the opportunity to present their comments on environmental issues they consider worthy of review.

"As we noted at a public meeting we held on Aug. 24th regarding the application, there are several opportunities for members of the public to raise concerns or offer comments on the proposed license extension for Oyster Creek. The meetings scheduled for Nov. 1st will be one such opportunity and we look forward to receiving the public's input," said Michael Masnik, the NRC project manager who is leading the environmental review.

Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant has a term of 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating license for Oyster Creek is due to expire on April 9, 2009.

AmerGen submitted a license renewal application for Oyster Creek on July 22. As part of its application, the company submitted an environmental report. The application can be reviewed via the NRC's web site at: www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/oystercreek.html. It is also available for review at the NRC's Public Document Room in Rockville, Md., which can be reached by phone at 1-800-397-4209, and at the Lacey Branch of the Ocean County Library, located at 10 E. Lacey Road.

An existing NRC document, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants" (NUREG-1437), assesses the scope and impact of environmental effects that would be associated with license renewal at any nuclear power plant site. The document for which the NRC will gather information at the Nov. 1st meetings will be a supplement to that generic environmental statement that is specific to Oyster Creek. It will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability of the license renewal action.

At the conclusion of the information-gathering process, the NRC staff will prepare a summary of the conclusions reached and significant issues identified. A copy will be sent to each person who participated in the scoping process. The summary will also be available on the NRC's web site through the Public Electronic Reading Room at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html and at the library in Lacey. Help in accessing documents through the Reading Room is available by contacting the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or by e-mail at pdr@nrc.gov.

The NRC staff will subsequently prepare a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) supplement for public comment and will hold a public meeting next summer to solicit comments. After consideration of comments on the draft report, the NRC will prepare a final EIS supplement.

Interested individuals may register to attend or present oral comments at the Nov. 1st meetings by contacting Mr. Masnik at 1-800-368-5642, ext. 1191, or by e-mail to OysterCreekEIS@nrc.gov by Oct. 24. Those who wish to offer comments may also register at the meetings within 15 minutes of the start of each session. Individual oral comments may be limited by the time available, depending on the number of persons who register.

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