



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR PALISADES LICENSE RENEWAL, ANNOUNCES APRIL 5 PUBLIC MEETING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has reached the preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts which would preclude renewal of the operating license for the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant located at Covert, Mich. The plant is operated by Nuclear Management Co.

The NRC is seeking public comment on the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed license renewal which includes the agency's preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts of renewal of the Palisades license for an additional 20 years.

The draft EIS is open for public comment until May 18 and will also be the subject of public meetings on April 5 in South Haven, Mich.

"The comments and views of the public help assure that we have identified and addressed the appropriate issues in our environmental review of the Palisades license renewal application," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. "The April 5 meeting also gives us a chance to discuss any issues and questions firsthand with the public."

The NRC has been reviewing the proposed extension of the Palisades license since Nuclear Management Co. submitted its application in March 2005. Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current NRC license at Palisades will expire on March 24, 2011.

The possible environmental effects of an additional 20 years of nuclear plant operation are described in the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement or GEIS (NUREG-1437). The NRC issues a site-specific supplement to the GEIS on each plant requesting license renewal to address the potential environmental impacts. The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for the Palisades reactor are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy-planning decision makers would be unreasonable.

On Wednesday, April 5, the NRC staff will hold two similar meetings in South Haven to obtain comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meetings will be held at the Lake Michigan College, 125 Veterans Boulevard. The sessions will begin at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. In addition, the NRC

staff will host informal discussions one hour prior to each meeting. NRC staff members will be available to answer questions and provide additional information about the license renewal process during those informal sessions. No formal comments on environmental issues will be accepted during these pre-meeting discussions.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including presentations by NRC staff on the draft supplement to the GEIS. There will then be an opportunity for public comments.

Written comments on the draft Palisades supplement to the GEIS will also be considered by NRC staff. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to PalisadesEIS@nrc.gov.

The draft EIS and other documents related to the license renewal application are available for public review at the South Haven Memorial Library, 314 Broadway St. Documents are also available on the NRC's web site at

<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/palisades.html>.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on May 18, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments as it prepares the final Palisades supplement to the GEIS. The supplement is scheduled to be issued in October.

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