



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS COMMENT ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR COLUMBIA NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL; MEETINGS SEPT. 27

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will solicit public comments at two meetings on Tuesday, Sept. 27, regarding its preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude a 20-year extension of the operating license for the Columbia Generating Station nuclear plant.

The Columbia Generating Station nuclear power plant is a boiling-water reactor located on the Columbia River about 160 miles southeast of Seattle.

The NRC issued a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on Columbia's proposed license renewal on August 23. The EIS will be discussed at meetings to be held at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sept. 27 at the Red Lion Hotel, 802 George Washington Way, Richland, Wash. The two meetings will follow the same format and cover the same content. They will begin with an overview, followed by more details of the contents of the report, and then will open for public comment.

In addition, the NRC staff will host informal discussions one hour prior to each meeting at the same facility. NRC staff members will be available to answer questions and provide information about the process during these discussions, but no oral comments on environmental issues will be accepted at these sessions.

For planning purposes, those who wish to present oral comments at the meeting are encouraged to contact Daniel Doyle at 301-415-3748 or Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov. People may also register to speak before the start of each session. Individual comment time may be limited by the time available.

Energy Northwest submitted a [license renewal application](#) for Columbia, including an environmental report, on Jan. 19, 2010. The NRC staff reviewed the report and performed an on-site audit. The staff also considered comments made during the environmental "scoping" process, including comments offered at public meetings held on April 6, 2010, in Richland. Based on its review, the NRC staff has preliminarily determined that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Columbia are not great enough to deny the option of license renewal for energy planning decision-makers.

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. Columbia's current operating license will expire on Dec. 20, 2023.

The possible 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 meetings will discuss the draft supplemental EIS pertaining specifically to Columbia.

The draft EIS, along with other related documents, will be available for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room at the NRC Headquarters, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.; or electronically through the agency's online document database, [ADAMS](#), using accession number ML11227A007. In addition, the draft EIS will be available for public inspection available at the Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Drive in Richland, and at the Mid-Columbia Libraries – Kennewick Branch, 1620 South Union St., Kennewick, Wash.

Members of the public may also submit written comments on the draft EIS by Nov. 16. Comments can be submitted at [regulations.gov](#) under docket ID NRC-2010-0029. The public can also submit comments by mail to Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch (RADB), Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001 or send faxes to RADB at (301) 492-3446.

After the conclusion of the public comment period, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments received and issue a final supplement to the GEIS for the plant. That supplement will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability for license renewal.

Additional information on the [license renewal review process](#) is available on the NRC website.

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NOTE: Anyone wishing to take photos or use a camera to record any portion of a NRC meeting should contact the Office of Public Affairs beforehand.

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