



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 11-195

October 12, 2011

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT GUIDANCE CONCERNING TREATMENT OF URANIUM FILTERED FROM LOCAL WATER SYSTEMS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is requesting public comment on draft guidance that would allow uranium recovery facilities to accept, process, and dispose of certain resins used to remove naturally occurring uranium from municipal water systems.

The guidance would clarify that the NRC considers the resins “equivalent feed” – essentially identical to material already processed at the facility – rather than “alternative feed” that would require a license amendment to accept and process.

This clarification can help community water systems comply with regulations issued in 2003 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, placing a limit of 30 micrograms of uranium in drinking water. The transport, treatment and disposal of the uranium-loaded filter resins can be a significant cost – according to the EPA, as much as 50 percent of operating costs for smaller community water systems.

These treatment resins are chemically and physically essentially the same as ion-exchange resins already used at uranium recovery facilities and would be processed in the same way. The NRC staff has determined that uranium recovery facilities should be permitted to accept these resins as equivalent feed without the need for a license amendment, provided the processing remains within the scope of the facilities’ existing safety and environmental review.

The guidance, a draft Regulatory Issue Summary, was published Sept. 30 in the *Federal Register* and corrected in a [subsequent notice](#) published Oct. 12. Comments will be accepted through Nov. 14 and may be submitted on the federal rulemaking website at www.regulations.gov, under Docket ID NRC-2011-0217. They may also be mailed to Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, announcements and Directives Branch, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001. Finally, comments may be faxed to 301-492-3446.

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