



NRC NEWS

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON VOGTLE EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION; MEETING TO BE HELD OCT. 4

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on its preliminary conclusion that environmental impacts would not keep the agency from issuing an Early Site Permit (ESP) for the Vogtle site, about 26 miles southeast of Augusta, Ga.

The preliminary conclusion is contained in NUREG-1872, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an Early Site Permit at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant Site." The draft EIS is available for public comment until Nov. 28, and will also be the subject of a public meeting Oct. 4 in Waynesboro, Ga.

The ESP process allows an applicant to address site-related issues, such as environmental impacts, for possible future construction and operation of a nuclear power plant at the site. The Vogtle application was filed Aug. 15, 2006, by Southern Nuclear Operating Company. If approved, the permit would give Southern up to 20 years to decide whether to build one or more nuclear plants on the site and to file an application with the NRC for approval to begin construction.

The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that a permit should be issued. The staff bases its conclusion on its independent review of Southern's environmental report, taking into account consultations with federal, state, tribal and local agencies and consideration of comments received during the public scoping process. The staff's preliminary conclusions include a finding that there are no environmentally preferable or obviously superior sites, and that any adverse environmental impacts from possible site preparation and preliminary construction activities at Vogtle could be redressed.

On Thursday, Oct. 4, the NRC staff will meet with the public to obtain comments on the draft EIS at the Waynesboro Auditorium of the Augusta Technical College, Waynesboro/Burke Campus, 216 Highway 24 South. The formal meeting will be transcribed and will run from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. In addition, the NRC staff will host an informal discussion two hours prior to the meeting. NRC staff members will answer questions and explain the ESP process during this informal session. An NRC staff person and a court reporter will also be available from 5 p.m. until 6:45 p.m. to receive comments from members of the public who wish to provide input but are unable to speak at the formal meeting.

For planning purposes, anyone interested in attending or presenting oral comments at the Oct. 4 meeting is encouraged to pre-register no later than Sept. 27 by contacting Cristina Guerrero of the NRC by telephone at (800) 368-5642, extension 2981, or by e-mail at Vogtle_EIS@nrc.gov . Interested persons may also register to speak within 15 minutes of the start of the meeting. Time for individual comments at the meetings may be limited to accommodate all speakers. People requesting special accommodations to attend or present information at the meeting should contact the NRC by Sept. 27 so the requests can be properly reviewed.

Written comments on the draft EIS will also be considered by NRC staff. Comments should be submitted either by mail (postmarked by Nov. 28) 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 (sent no later than Nov. 28) at Vogtle_EIS@nrc.gov .

The NRC staff has also issued a Safety Evaluation Report (SER), with open items, for the Vogtle ESP application. Southern must address the open items before the staff can finalize the report. The draft EIS, SER and related documents are available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md. They will also be available on the NRC's Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/esp/vogtle.html> . In addition, the Burke County Library in Waynesboro has agreed to make the draft EIS and SER available for public inspection.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on Nov. 28, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments provided, then issue a final EIS on the environmental acceptability of an ESP at Vogtle in mid-2008.

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