

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

No. 00-007
January 7, 2000

NRC PROPOSES TO ADOPT ITS WEBSITE
TO ANNOUNCE MEETINGS OPEN TO PUBLIC

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its policies to formally adopt the NRC website (<http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/PUBLIC/meet.html>) as its forum to announce meetings open to the public.

Previously, the NRC's policy called for such sessions to be announced primarily via an electronic bulletin board and a telephone recording, both of which were toll-free. However, since the NRC began to post its notice of meetings open to the public on its website, public use of the other automated means has dropped dramatically.

For people who cannot access the NRC's website, assistance on scheduled meetings would be made available through Commission staff at the Public Document Room, by calling toll-free at 1-800-397-4209.

An additional administrative policy change would enable the NRC to capitalize on advanced computer storage technology methods. Current policy limits the announcement of meetings to those scheduled within 60 days. This practice was established due to the limited amount of computer storage capacity when the public meeting notice system was designed. With advancements in computer technology, though, this restriction is no longer needed. Accordingly, under the proposed change, the NRC would eliminate the 60-day limit so that meetings can be announced as soon as arrangements have been finalized.

The final change would clarify the NRC's policy regarding the announcement of the public meetings. The current policy states that meeting announcement information is to be provided by the staff to the meeting announcement coordinator at least ten days in advance of the scheduled date. This policy was designed to ensure that sufficient time was given to process the notice and to provide the public with at least one week's notice time. It does not, however, explicitly state when the public can expect notice of the meeting.

The Commission's proposed policy change notes that staff meetings will be announced as soon as definitive arrangements on the date, time and location have been made, but generally no fewer than 10 calendar days prior to the meeting. The Commission staff believes

this policy change will clarify how far in advance the public can generally expect to receive notification of an open staff meeting via the NRC Web site.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments within 60 days of publication of a Federal Register notice on this subject, which is expected shortly. Written comments should be submitted to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff.

Comments may also be submitted via the NRC's interactive rulemaking Web Site at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>.

###