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No. 99-223

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1999)

***NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC WORKSHOP IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND  
ON POTENTIAL CHANGES TO HEARING PROCESS***

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is convening a public workshop on October 26 and 27 in Rockville, Maryland, to solicit views on potential changes to processes and procedures for making decisions where there is a public hearing. The effort will help the NRC determine what changes should be made and will assist in the development of proposed rules.

The workshop, which is open to the public, will be held in the Commission's conference room at agency headquarters, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. The meeting is designed to encourage open discussion on hearing process issues in a "roundtable" format.

Earlier this year, the NRC's Office of General Counsel sent a memorandum to the Commissioners (SECY-99-006) discussing legal requirements for agency hearings and policy considerations for any revision in the process. The document is available to the public on the agency's Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html#1999>. The memorandum did not make a recommendation for revising the hearing process, but instead highlighted the pros and cons of different approaches. As a result, one of the primary issues for consideration is the Commission's general desire to move towards less formal proceedings.

Here is a summary of the workshop agenda:

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26**

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. -- Welcome, agenda overview and introduction of participants.

9:00 - 9:30 a.m. -- Overview of the NRC hearing process.

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. -- Discussion of emerging issues addressing agency adjudications.

10:40 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. -- Discussion of the NRC's hearing process goals and participant feedback.

1:15 - 2:15 p.m. -- Discussion of a formal versus an informal hearing process.

2:15 - 3 p.m. -- Examination of different informal hearing models.

3:30 - 5 p.m. -- Discussion of hearing process objectives.

5:00 - 5:15 p.m. -- Preview of next day's discussion.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27

8:30 - 9:30 a.m. -- Comparison of formal and informal processes. Summary discussion by participants.

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. -- Discussion of appropriate hearing processes for NRC actions.

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. -- Discussion of possible improvements to NRC's formal hearing process.

Noon -- Final comments and next steps.

Those seeking additional information on the workshop should contact Francis X. Cameron, Special Counsel for Public Liaison, Office of the General Counsel, NRC, at 301-415-1642.

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