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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC STAFF ISSUES DRAFT RADIOLOGICAL CRITERIA
FOR DECOMMISSIONING OF NUCLEAR FACILITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has developed and is making publicly available draft radiological criteria for the decommissioning of NRC-licensed nuclear facilities. As part of an enhanced participatory process for developing the criteria, the NRC is making the staff draft public now and is circulating it to interested parties for comment.

Purpose of this informal comment period is to receive early comments on the adequacy of the staff proposals and the extent to which the proposals have considered the range of viewpoints expressed during workshops and scoping meetings that the NRC held earlier as part of its enhanced participatory rulemaking process.

The normal pattern of NRC rulemaking is for the NRC staff to develop a proposed rule for Commission consideration, publish the proposed rule for public comment, consider comments received and prepare a final rule for Commission approval. As directed and approved by the Commission, the NRC staff has in this case enhanced public participation in the early stages through a series of workshops, generic environmental impact statement scoping meetings, a dedicated electronic bulletin board system, written submissions and now the issuance of draft criteria for informal public review before formal Commission review and approval. There will be an opportunity for additional public comment in connection with any formal proposed rule that may be issued by the Commission.

The NRC believes that development of radiological criteria for decommissioning is needed to provide a clear and consistent regulatory basis for determining the extent to which lands and structures must be remediated before a site can be considered decommissioned. The criteria would replace existing guidance that NRC is currently using on a site-specific basis. However, they would not apply to sites already covered by a decommissioning plan approved by the Commission.

In developing the draft criteria, the staff has reassessed the basis for residual contamination levels contained in existing

guidance in light of changes in basic radiation protection standards, improvements in remediation and radiation detection technologies, decommissioning experience obtained during the past 15 years, and comments received from workshops held as part of this enhanced participatory rulemaking effort.

Interested persons may obtain a copy of the NRC staff's draft rule and a summary of earlier comments received (compiled in a report with the identification number "NUREG/CR-6156") by

(1) Requesting one free copy from Ms. Roberta Gordon, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone: 301/492-3746, fax: 301/492-3866;

(2) Downloading the files from an electronic bulletin board established by the NRC for this rulemaking; or

(3) Inspection and copying for a fee in the NRC Public Document Room, 3230 L Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the staff's draft rule by March 11, 1994. Written comments should be directed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

Alternatively, interested persons may view the draft criteria and related documents and submit comments electronically via a special electronic bulletin board that the NRC has established.

As explained in a Federal Register notice published on July 13, 1993, the bulletin board may be accessed by calling 1-800-880-6091 using a personal computer, a modem and generally available communications software. Communication protocol settings are no parity, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit (N,8,1) and ANSI or VT-100 terminal emulation. Comments should be provided in Wordperfect or ASCII format. Further information on the Enhanced Participatory Rulemaking on Radiological Criteria for Decommissioning Electronic Bulletin Board is available from Christine Daily, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, telephone: 301/492-3999, fax: 301/492-3866.

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