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NRC ISSUES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
ON PROPOSED LOUISIANA ENERGY SERVICES PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a draft environmental impact statement on the proposal by Louisiana Energy Services to construct and operate a uranium enrichment facility in Claiborne Parish, Louisiana, near Homer and about 50 miles northeast of Shreveport.

The proposed facility would use a gaseous centrifuge process, with natural uranium hexafluoride as the feed material. The output product would be up to about 1000 tons annually of uranium hexafluoride enriched up to 5 percent in the isotope uranium-235.

The enriched uranium would be used to produce fuel for commercial nuclear power plants in the United States. Louisiana Energy Services estimates that the facility capacity represents about 17 percent of the projected U.S. requirement for enrichment services in the year 2000.

The plant would be constructed in three phases over 5 years. Facility operation would begin after completion of phase 1 and continue for 30 years. Decontamination and decommissioning will require an additional 5 years.

Included in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) are an assessment of the impacts of construction, normal operations, potential accidents and the eventual decontamination and decommissioning of the site. The draft EIS concludes that the facility can be constructed and operated with small and acceptable impacts on the public and the environment.

Publication of the draft EIS is one step in the ongoing NRC process to evaluate Louisiana Energy Service's application for a license to construct and operate the facility. After evaluating and considering public comments received on the draft, the NRC staff expects to issue a Final Environmental Impact Statement, approximately in the summer of 1994.

Both the EIS and the Safety Evaluation Report will be considered in a hearing to be conducted by an NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Participants in the hearing will include Citizens Against Nuclear Trash (a group that has been admitted as an intervenor in the proceeding), Louisiana Energy Services and the NRC staff.

The draft EIS is available for public inspection and copying at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW, Washington, DC, and at the NRC Local Public Document Room, Claiborne Parish Library, 901 Edgewood Drive, Homer, Louisiana. A free single copy of the document (which has been assigned the identification number "NUREG-1484") may be obtained by written request to the Director, Division of Information Support Services, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555.

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the draft EIS within 45 days of publication of a Federal Register notice on this subject by the Environmental Protection Agency. The comments should be addressed to the Chief, Enrichment Branch, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555.