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NRC ISSUES CERTIFICATES TO USEC  
FOR URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards today issued certificates to the U.S. Enrichment Corporation (USEC) for operation of uranium enrichment plants located near Paducah, Kentucky, and Portsmouth, Ohio.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 requires the NRC to certify the facilities periodically for compliance with its safety, safeguards and security requirements. This is the first certification.

USEC operates the two plants under a lease from the Department of Energy, which owns and formerly operated them. The plants use a gaseous diffusion process to enrich uranium hexafluoride gas in the uranium-235 isotope, so that the material can be used to produce nuclear fuel for civilian nuclear power plants.

After a transition period following issuance of the certificates, regulatory authority over plant operations will be transferred from the Department of Energy to the NRC on March 3, 1997.

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