

**United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region II
61 Forsyth Street, Suite 23T85, Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel. 404-562-4416 or 4417 Fax 404-562-4980
Internet: kmc2@nrc.gov or rdh1@nrc.gov**

No: II-98-58
Contact: Ken Clark or Roger Hannah

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NRC SEEKS INPUT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT ON PROPOSED
OCONEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a public meeting October 19 in Clemson, South Carolina, on an application from Duke Energy Corporation to renew its operating licenses for Oconee Nuclear Power Station, Units 1, 2 and 3, near Seneca, South Carolina. Members of the public are invited to attend and comment on what environmental issues the NRC should consider in its review of the proposed license renewal.

The meeting will be held at the Ramada Inn, 1310 Tiger Boulevard, in Clemson. Two similar sessions will be held, in the afternoon and in the evening. Interested persons are invited to participate in the session that is more convenient for them. The first will begin at 2:00 p.m. and continue until 5:00 p.m.; the second will begin at 7:00 p.m. and continue until 10:00 p.m.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews. The NRC staff will give a presentation on the license renewal and environmental review processes. Duke Energy will discuss the environmental portion of the proposed license renewal.

Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating licenses for Oconee will expire on February 6, 2013 for Unit 1, October 6, 2013 for Unit 2 and July 19, 2014 for Unit 3. Duke Energy submitted its application for license renewal in July.

As part of its application, Duke Energy submitted an environmental report. That report is available for public review in the NRC's Local Public Document Room located in the Oconee County Library, 501 West South Broad Street in Walhalla, SC, and at the NRC Public Document Room located at 2120 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

An existing NRC document, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants" (NUREG- 1437), assesses the scope and impact of environmental effects that would be associated with license renewal at any nuclear power plant site. The document for which NRC will gather information at the October meeting will be an Oconee-plant-specific supplement to that generic environmental statement. It will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability of the license renewal action.

At the conclusion of the information-gathering process, the NRC staff will prepare a summary of the conclusions reached and significant issues identified and will send a copy to each person who participated. The summary will also be available for public review in the NRC public document rooms in Walhalla, SC and Washington.

The NRC staff will then prepare a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) supplement for

public comment and will hold a public meeting to solicit comments. After consideration of comments received on the draft, the NRC will prepare a final EIS supplement.

Persons may register to attend or present oral comments at the October 19 meeting by contacting James H. Wilson by telephone at 800/368-5642, extension 415-1108, or by Internet at oconeeis@nrc.gov no later than October 15. Members of the public who wish to make comments may also register at the Ramada Inn meeting site within 15 minutes of the start of each session. Individual comments may be limited by the time available.

Members of the public may also submit written comments on the scope of the environmental impact supplement. They should be submitted by November 19, either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop T-6-D-59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, C 20555-0001, or by Internet to the same address as above: oconeeis@nrc.gov.

The issuance of a final environmental statement for Oconee is planned for February 2000.

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EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS: Detailed information about power reactor license renewal can be found in several locations on the NRC's web page (www.nrc.gov). A copy of the application to renew the Oconee licenses is available for public inspection at the NRC's Public Document Room in the Gelman building, 2120 L. Street, NW, Washington, DC and the Local Public Document Room for Oconee in the Oconee County Library, 501 West South Broad Street in Walhalla, SC.