

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

No. 98-146

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, August 18, 1998)

NRC ISSUES LICENSE TO U.S. AIR FORCE FOR RESEARCH REACTOR
AT MCCLELLAN AIR FORCE BASE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a license to the U.S. Air Force to operate the existing nuclear research reactor at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, California.

The Air Force has operated the General Atomics TRIGA reactor under its own authority since 1990, but decided to seek an NRC license.

The license is valid for 20 years. It authorizes the reactor to operate at a thermal power level of 2.3 megawatts.

The facility was originally designed to perform neutron radiography of aircraft components to detect low-level corrosion and hidden defects. Its use has expanded to include irradiations of silicon for use in the semiconductor industry. The reactor also supports many university research and development programs, including a medical research project that will carry out boron neutron capture therapy for treating cancer patients.

The Air Force submitted its license application in October 1996. The NRC last October published a Federal Register notice offering an opportunity to request a hearing on the application, but no hearing requests were received.

The NRC review of the application found that there is reasonable assurance that the activities authorized by the license will be conducted without endangering public health and safety and in compliance with the Commission's regulations.

###