

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. 98-136

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Monday, August 3, 1998)

NRC SCHEDULES MEETINGS ON URANIUM, THORIUM
IN TEXAS, NEW MEXICO, WYOMING, COLORADO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold public meetings this month in Austin, Texas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Casper, Wyoming; and Denver, Colorado, to discuss improving the regulatory framework used to license and regulate uranium and thorium extraction facilities, mill tailings and associated activities.

NRC and industry experience in using and implementing the current regulations, particularly in the last few years, has led the NRC staff to undertake a review of the existing requirements to determine ways of implementing a more consistent and effective program.

The Austin meeting will be August 24 at the Homer Thornberry Judicial Building, 903 San Jacinto, Room 116. The Albuquerque meeting is set for August 25 at the Federal Building, 517 Gold Street, S.W., Room 4031. The Casper meeting will be held August 26 at the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, Basco Building, 777 West 1st Street. The Denver meeting will be August 27 at the Federal Office Building, 1961 Stout Street, Conference Room 1083.

All meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m.

The NRC has scheduled the four meetings to obtain early public comment on how best to revise its current regulatory framework for licensing of uranium and thorium extraction. Among the items to be discussed is a paper by the National Mining Association, called "Recommendations for a Coordinated Approach to Regulating the Uranium Recovery Industry." Copies of that document are available for review or purchase at the NRC Public Document Room, Washington, D.C. 20555, telephone: 202/634-3273. The NRC also intends to use the meetings to seek information on what environmental issues the agency should consider in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement that will be issued in association with any rulemaking that could be undertaken.

The NRC staff will make a short presentation at each meeting to provide background on the purpose and issues identified to date. However, the primary purpose of the meetings is to obtain public comment. Persons who wish to speak are

asked to register by August 21 with Anne E. Ramirez, Uranium Recovery Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, telephone: 301/415-6631, e-mail: aeg@nrc.gov.

Further information is available from Myron H. Fliegel, also of the NRC's Uranium Recovery Branch, telephone: 301/415-6629, e-mail: mh1@nrc.gov.

###