NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES DRAFT SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT ON PROPOSED MOX FACILITY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a draft safety evaluation report concerning the construction of a proposed mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility at the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Savannah River site near Aiken, South Carolina.

The draft report is a snapshot of the staff's present positions, based on information received to date. The staff expects to issue a revised draft and a final safety evaluation report on construction of the facility, after evaluating further information to be submitted by DOE's contractor, Duke Cogema Stone & Webster (DCS).

In the draft safety evaluation report just issued, the NRC staff concluded that DCS needs to provide additional information on a number of issues before a construction authorization can be granted. A complete list of the items that the staff considers unresolved is provided in the draft report.

A copy of the "Draft Safety Evaluation Report on the Construction Authorization Request for the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility" will be available at: http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html on the NRC's web site. The report will also be available through the NRC Public Document Room at 301/415-4737 or 1/800-397-4209.

If NRC authorizes construction, DCS could begin building a MOX facility designed to convert surplus weapons-grade plutonium, supplied by the Department of Energy, into MOX fuel for use in commercial nuclear power reactors authorized to use such fuel. Converting weapons-grade plutonium into MOX fuel helps advance the cause of nonproliferation by converting the material into a form unsuitable for use in weapons. DCS is required to submit a separate application for a license to operate the proposed MOX facility.

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