



NRC NEWS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC STAFF SEEKS INPUT ON SUMMER NUCLEAR PLANT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has reached the preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude the renewal of the operating license for Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station located in Jenkinsville, SC.

The information is contained in a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on the proposed license renewal. The draft EIS is open for public comment until October 3, 2003, and will also be the subject of public meetings August 26 in Jenkinsville, South Carolina.

The NRC has been reviewing the application for extension of the V.C. Summer license since South Carolina Electric & Gas, which operates the plant, filed it in August 2002. 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 license for V.C. Summer will expire on August 6, 2022.

The possible environmental effects of an additional 20 years of nuclear plant operation are described in the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement, or GEIS (NUREG-1437). The NRC issues a site-specific supplement to the GEIS on each plant requesting license renewal to address the potential environmental impacts. Issues specific to V.C. Summer are addressed in Supplement 15. The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for V.C. Summer are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy-planning decision makers would be unreasonable.

On Tuesday, August 26, the NRC staff will hold two similar meetings to obtain comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meetings will be held in the Fellowship Room of the White Hall A.M.E. Church in Jenkinsville. The two sessions will begin at 1:30 in the afternoon and at 7:00 in the evening, respectively. In addition, the NRC staff will host informal discussions one hour prior to each meeting. NRC staff members will be available to answer questions and provide additional information about the license renewal process during those informal sessions, but no comment submittals on environmental issues will be accepted then.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including a presentation by NRC staff and its contractors on the contents of the draft supplement to the GEIS. There will then be an opportunity for public comments.

For planning purposes, anyone interested in attending or presenting oral comments at the August 26 meetings is encouraged to pre-register by contacting Gregory F. Suber of the NRC by telephone at (800) 368-5642, extension 1124, or by e-mail at VCSummerEIS@nrc.gov. Interested persons may also register to speak before the start of each session. Time for individual comments at the meetings may be limited to accommodate all speakers.

Written comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS will also be considered by NRC staff. Comments should be submitted 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, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to VCSummerEIS@nrc.gov.

The draft supplement to the GEIS, along with other related documents, is available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room at NRC headquarters, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. It is also available on the Internet at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1437/supplement15. In addition, the Thomas Cooper Library, 1322 Greene Street, Columbia, South Carolina; and the Fairfield County Library, 300 Washington Street, Winnsboro, South Carolina, have agreed to make the draft supplement to the GEIS available for public inspection.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on October 3, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments provided and issue a final supplement to the GEIS. That supplement will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability for license renewal.

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