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NRC STAFF SEEKS INPUT ON DRESDEN DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold two public meetings on January 14 in Morris, Illinois, to discuss its preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude the renewal of the operating license for Dresden Nuclear Power Plant. The two-unit facility, located in Morris, Illinois, is operated by Exelon Generation Company.

The first session will be held at 1:30 p.m. and the second session will be at 7 p.m. at Jennifer's Garden Banquet and Convention Center, 555 West Gore Road, Morris. The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including a presentation by NRC staff and its contractors on the contents of the draft supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS). The public will have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments at the end of each session.

In addition, the NRC staff will be available for informal discussions one hour prior to each meeting to answer questions and provide additional information about the license renewal process, but no submittals on environmental issues will be accepted during this time.

The NRC has been reviewing the application for extension of the Dresden license since Exelon filed it in January of last year. 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 Dresden Unit 2, will expire on December 22, 2009, and January 12, 2011 for Dresden Unit 3. Dresden Unit 1 has been shut down since 1978 and is in decommissioning status.

The possible environmental effects of an additional 20 years of operation for any nuclear power plant are described in the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement, or GEIS (NUREG-1437). The NRC issues a site-specific supplement to the GEIS to address the potential environmental impacts for each plant requesting license renewal.

Environmental issues specific to Dresden are addressed in Supplement 17 to the GEIS. The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Dresden are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal would be unreasonable.

The draft EIS on the proposed license renewal is open for public comment until February 24. Written comments may 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 DresdenEIS@nrc.gov.

The draft supplement to the GEIS, along with other related documents, is available for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room at NRC headquarters, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. It is also available electronically on the NRC web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1437/supplement17/index.html>.

In addition, review copies are available at the Morris Area Public Library, located at 604 West Liberty Street, Morris and the Coal City Public Library District, located at 85 North Garfield Street, Coal City.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, 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 of license renewal.

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