



NRC NEWS

**UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II**

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ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD TO HEAR PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON USE OF MIXED OXIDE FUEL AT CATAWBA

An Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will hear brief oral public statements, called limited appearance statements, in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Tuesday, June 15, in connection with a proceeding involving Duke Energy's request to the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to amend the operating license of the Catawba Nuclear Station to allow the use of four mixed oxide, or MOX, test assemblies.

Most commercial nuclear fuel used in this country contains uranium as the primary material to be used during the fission process. MOX fuel, however, contains a mixture of plutonium and uranium oxides, with plutonium providing the primary fissile material. Duke has submitted its request as part of the ongoing U.S.-Russian Federation plutonium disposition program, a nuclear nonproliferation program to dispose of surplus plutonium from nuclear weapons by converting the material into MOX fuel and using that fuel in commercial nuclear power reactors.

The ASLB will hear the statements on June 15 in two sessions, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., in the Grand Ballroom (lobby level) of the Omni Charlotte Hotel, located at 132 Trade Street.

Any person who is not a party to the proceeding will be permitted to make an oral statement setting forth his or her position on matters of concern related to the proceeding. These statements do not constitute testimony or evidence, but may help the Board and/or the parties in their deliberations in connection with the issues.

An evidentiary hearing previously scheduled to commence on June 15 in Charlotte has been rescheduled for July 14 at the NRC Offices in Rockville, Maryland. At that hearing, the Board will receive testimony and exhibits and allow the cross-examination of witnesses on certain matters at issue in this proceeding.

Those people who have submitted a timely written request to make an oral limited appearance statement in Charlotte will be given priority over those who have not. To be considered timely, written requests to make an oral statement must be mailed, faxed or sent by e-mail and received by the close of business (4:30 p.m. EDT) on **Monday, June 7**. Written requests to make an oral statement should be sent to:

Mail - Office of Secretary
Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Fax - (301) 415-1101 (verification (301) 415-1966)

E-Mail - hearingdocket@nrc.gov

A copy of the written request to make a limited appearance statement should also, using the same method of service, be sent to the Chairman of the licensing board as follows:

Mail - Administrative Judge Ann Marshall Young
Atomic Safety & Licensing Board Panel
Mail Stop T-3F23
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555 - 0001

Fax - (301) 415-5599 (verification (301) 415-7550)

E-Mail: - AMY@nrc.gov

The time allotted for each statement normally will be no more than five minutes, but may be further limited, depending on the number of written requests to speak and/or the number of persons present at the designated times. If all speakers present have made their oral statements prior to 9:00 p.m., the ASLB may terminate the session before 9:00.

Interested persons may also submit written limited appearance statements at any time by addressing them to those indicated for receipt of requests for time to make oral statements.

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