



NRC NEWS

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CONTACT: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

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Email: opal@nrc.gov

NRC TO MEET WITH PUBLIC TO DISCUSS SPENT FUEL STORAGE AT INDIAN POINT

The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with the public on July 15 to discuss the licensing and regulatory programs that will govern plans to construct and operate a dry cask interim storage facility for spent nuclear fuel at the Indian Point 2 and 3 nuclear power plants. Indian Point is located in Buchanan, N.Y., and operated by Entergy Nuclear Northeast.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at Crystal Bay on the Hudson-Charles Point Marina, at 5 John Walsh Blvd., Peekskill, N.Y.

"This is a good opportunity for members of the public to learn more about dry cask storage, its intended use at Indian Point and the NRC's oversight of those activities," said Larry W. Camper, Deputy Director of the Licensing and Inspection Directorate in the NRC's Spent Fuel Project Office. "We look forward to an exchange of information on this important topic."

During the first part of the meeting, NRC staff members will provide details of the agency's oversight role in reviewing dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel. Among the topics will be: the NRC's overall regulatory program for spent nuclear fuel and technical reviews and licensing processes for dry cask systems, as well as the agency's inspection program for such facilities, including oversight of design, fabrication, pre-operational demonstrations and operational activities.

Following the NRC's presentation, a facilitated question-and-answer session will be conducted with members of the public.

Entergy notified the NRC late last year of its intention to build a dry cask storage facility, also known as an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI), at Indian Point. There are currently about 30 such ISFSIs at nuclear power plants across the nation. Other plants are also either actively pursuing or considering such facilities.

Spent nuclear fuel consists of long, thin rods -- they can be 12 feet or more in length and have a diameter about the size of a pencil -- holding enriched uranium pellets. The rods are grouped into assemblies or bundles containing as many as 256 rods each. Once the assemblies have been used

in a reactor, they are placed in interim storage facilities, such as a circulating-water spent fuel pool or a dry cask storage system.

With the dry cask storage option, fuel is removed from the pool after a sufficient period of cooling time has elapsed and placed inside robust stainless-steel casks. Those casks are then sealed, filled with an inert gas and placed inside specially designed storage “overpacks,” in this case cylindrical vaults made of steel-reinforced concrete. Convective air flow through vents at the top and bottom of the units helps ensure that the fuel remains properly cooled. The amount of heat given off by spent fuel assemblies loaded into a cask would typically be less than that generated by an average home heating system. The storage units must be capable of resisting floods, tornadoes, projectiles, temperature extremes and other unusual scenarios.

Dry cask storage is a temporary storage solution pending construction of a permanent U.S. repository for high-level radioactive waste. The Department of Energy, which hopes to open such a repository at Yucca Mountain, Nev., is expected to apply to the NRC later this year for a license to begin construction of that facility.

An NRC fact sheet on dry cask storage is available on the NRC web site at:
www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/dry-cask-storage.html

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