



NRC NEWS

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

61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. II-04-045

August 12, 2004

CONTACT: Ken Clark (404)562-4416
Roger Hannah (404)562-4417

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

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

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has reached the preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts to preclude renewal of the operating licenses for the Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Power Plant located in Houston County, Ala., about 16 miles east of Dothan.

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 November 5, 2004, and will also be the subject of public meetings September 30 in Dothan.

The NRC has been reviewing the application for extension of the Farley license since Southern Nuclear Operating Company, which operates the plant, filed it in September 2003. 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 NRC licenses at Farley will expire on June 25, 2017, for Unit 1 and March 31, 2021, for Unit 2.

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 Farley are addressed in Supplement 18. The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Farley are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy-planning decision makers would be unreasonable.

On Thursday, Sept. 30, the NRC staff will hold two similar meetings to obtain comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meetings will be held at the Quality Inn, 3053 Ross Clark Circle in Dothan. 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 Sept. 30 meetings is encouraged to pre-register by contacting Jack Cushing of the NRC by telephone at (800) 368-5642, extension 1424, or by e-mail at FarleyEIS@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, Office of Administration, Mailstop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to FarleyEIS@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, Md. It is also available on the Internet at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html under accession number ML042180117. In addition, the Houston Love Memorial Library, 212 West Burdeshaw Street, Dothan, Ala., and the Lucy Maddox Memorial Library, 11880 Columbia Street, Blakely, Ga., have agreed to make the draft supplement to the GEIS available for public inspection.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on November 5, 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.

###