



NRC NEWS

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NRC FINDS NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS FROM PROPOSED CENTRIFUGE ENRICHMENT PLANT IN OHIO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued its final environmental impact statement on a proposed gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant in Piketon, Ohio, concluding there would be small to moderate impacts on traffic, air pollution and the local economy, but that anticipated benefits of the facility would outweigh any adverse effects.

USEC Inc. submitted its application to construct and operate the American Centrifuge Plant in August 2004. The plant would be located on land leased from the U.S. Department of Energy at DOE's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant site in Piketon.

The environmental impact statement categorizes potential impacts of the plant in three ways: "Small" impacts are not detectable or are so minor that they would neither destabilize nor noticeably alter the environment; "Moderate" impacts are sufficient to noticeably alter but not destabilize a resource; while "Large" impacts are clearly noticeable and sufficient to destabilize a resource.

The environmental study describes small-to-moderate socioeconomic impacts of the proposed plant. Specifically, an estimated 3,362 full-time jobs would be created in the area from 2006 to 2010 as a result of plant construction. During operation from 2010 to 2040, about 1,500 jobs would be created in the Piketon area. The study also notes moderate socioeconomic impacts to Paducah, Ky., where USEC is expected to terminate operations at its gaseous diffusion enrichment plant once the Piketon centrifuge plant begins production.

The study also notes small-to-moderate impacts on traffic along the two main roads in the Piketon area, especially during construction of the centrifuge plant. Air quality may also be affected by dust and other particulate matter kicked up in an area that already sees similar impacts from agriculture. The study also examines impacts on geology, water resources, cultural resources, noise and public occupational health and safety, among others. The staff determined that the environmental impacts of the proposed facility in all areas other than those specifically discussed above would be small.

The NRC published a draft environmental impact statement in September, and held a public meeting in Piketon to receive public comments. The final report addresses the nearly 300 individual comments the NRC staff identified from letters, facsimile transmittals and e-mails received from approximately 15 individuals, and from oral comments given by 17 individuals.

The final environmental impact statement is available for public viewing on the NRC's Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1834/> .

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