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

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Email: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL; MEETINGS JULY 12

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is seeking public comment on its preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude renewal of the operating license for the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station in Lacey Township, N.J.

The information is contained in a draft supplemental environmental impact statement on the proposed license renewal issued this month. As part of its license renewal application, AmerGen submitted an environmental report. The NRC staff reviewed the report and performed an on-site audit. The staff also considered comments made during the environmental scoping process, including comments offered at public meetings held November 1 in Toms River. Based on its review, the NRC staff has preliminarily determined that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for Oyster Creek are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy planning decision-makers would be unreasonable.

The draft supplemental environmental impact statement is open for public comment until September 8, and will also be the subject of public meetings on Wednesday, July 12 at the Quality Inn, 815 Route 37 in Toms River, N.J. There will be two sessions, one at 1:30 p.m., and one at 7:00 p.m.. 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 information about the process during those informal sessions, but no comments on environmental issues will be accepted then.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including a discussion by NRC staff and its contractors of the contents of the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meeting will then be opened for public comment.

For planning purposes, those interested in attending are encouraged to pre-register by contacting Dr. Michael Masnik of the NRC by telephone at 800/368-5642, extension 1191, or by e-mail at OysterCreekEIS@nrc.gov no later than July 5. 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, Mail Stop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to OysterCreekEIS@nrc.gov .

The NRC has been reviewing the Oyster Creek license renewal application since AmerGen submitted it on July 22, 2005. Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant has a term of 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating license for Oyster Creek is due to expire on April 9, 2009.

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 Oyster Creek are addressed in Supplement 28.

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, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland; or electronically through the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible through the NRC webpage at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html . The accession number of the draft Supplement 28 to the GEIS is ML061520231. In addition, the Lacey Public Library, 10 East Lacey Road in Forked River, has agreed to make the draft supplement to the GEIS available for public inspection.

At the conclusion of the public comment period the NRC staff will consider and address the comments received and issue a final supplement to the GEIS. That supplement will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability for license renewal.

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