

Official Transcript of Proceedings
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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Environmental Scoping Public Meeting
Evening Session

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UNITED STATES

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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WOLF CREEK NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING PUBLIC MEETING

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2006

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The meeting came to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Coffey County Library, Burlington Branch, 410 Juniatta Street, Burlington, Kansas, Stephen Hoffman, presiding.

PRESENT:

- STEPHEN T. HOFFMAN NRC
- VERONICA M. RODRIGUEZ Project Manager, NRC
- CHRISTIAN JACOBS Project Manager, NRC
- RANI FRANOVICH Environmental Branch B
Chief, Division of
License Renewal, NRC
- JEREMY GROOM Reactor Inspector, NRC

A-G-E-N-D-A

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(7:00 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. HOFFMAN: We'll start our meeting
4 tonight. My name is Steve Hoffman. I'm a Senior
5 Project Manager at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
6 or NRC as we'll refer to it tonight.

7 I'd like to welcome you to our public
8 meeting. The subject of the meeting today is the
9 license renewal application for Wolf Creek Nuclear
10 Generating Station.

11 I'm going to be your facilitator tonight.
12 Hopefully, make sure everybody has a productive
13 meeting.

14 Before we get started, I'll give you a
15 little information on the process for the meeting
16 tonight, so you know what to expect. First, I'm going
17 to go into the format of the meeting; second, a
18 discussion of the simple ground rules; and then,
19 third, introduce the NRC speakers.

20 Okay. As far as the format of the meeting
21 goes, it's going to be a two-part format. In the
22 first part, we're going to give you some background
23 information on the license renewal process in general,
24 and specifically on the environmental review and
25 scoping process. This way hopefully you'll have a

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1 better understanding of what we look at when we
2 evaluate a license renewal application.

3 The second part is an opportunity to
4 listen to you, to get formal comments on the
5 environmental review, and what should be in the scope
6 of the environmental review. And the term "scoping"
7 is one that we use in preparing environmental impact
8 statements, and it basically is to define what is in
9 the scope of the review, what the issues are, and what
10 alternatives we should possibly consider as part of
11 the process.

12 We're going to be taking written comments
13 on the scope of the environmental review, which the
14 speakers later will give you more detail on. But just
15 to let you know, that anything that we hear tonight
16 will be given the same consideration as a written
17 comment.

18 Ground rules for the meeting -- pretty
19 simple. After we go through the presentations, we're
20 going to have a question and answer session, in case
21 we -- make sure you understand what the process is,
22 and, if you have any questions, clarify. At that
23 time, you know, we ask that only one person speak. We
24 are transcribing the meeting, and so we want to make
25 sure we get a clear transcript and identify who is

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1 speaking.

2 After that, we'll get into the formal
3 comment period on the environmental review process.
4 And if you decide later that you have some comments,
5 didn't speak, you can always send them in written --
6 or if you want to add more detail to any comments you
7 give tonight, you can submit those later in writing.

8 The comments tonight are important for two
9 reasons. It alerts the staff as to what issues they
10 need to be looking at. It also gives them the
11 opportunity to speak in more detail with you, in case
12 they need more information. And, second, it lets
13 other people attending also know what issues might
14 possibly be of interest and that the NRC will be
15 working on.

16 The speakers tonight -- we have two main
17 speakers. The first one is Veronica Rodriguez. She
18 is the Project Manager responsible for the safety
19 review of the application, and she'll be giving you an
20 overview of the renewal process. She has been with
21 the NRC for five years and has a bachelor's degree in
22 chemical engineering and a master's in project
23 management, both from the University of Puerto Rico.

24 The second speaker will be Christian
25 Jacobs. He has been with the NRC for about seven

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1 months, but has worked for approximately five years
2 for the Army and Navy as a Project Manager and
3 Acquisition and Test Director. He also was an
4 environmental consultant for 10 years before that.
5 He's got a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from
6 Virginia Tech and a master's in environmental
7 engineering from Johns Hopkins.

8 So with that, I thank you for being here
9 tonight to participate in the meeting. And we'll
10 first go to Veronica, and then Christian, and we'll
11 take questions after that.

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thanks, Steve.

13 Good evening. My name is Veronica
14 Rodriguez, and I'm the Project Manager responsible for
15 the review of the Wolf Creek Generating Station
16 license renewal application.

17 The purpose of today's meeting is to
18 provide you with an overview of the license renewal
19 review process. After the conclusion of this
20 presentation, the staff will be very happy to answer
21 any questions that you may have in our review or the
22 scope of our review.

23 Before I begin the discussion of the
24 license renewal review process, I would like to take
25 a couple of minutes to talk about what do we do and

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1 what is our mission in the NRC. The two principal
2 NRC's governing statutes are the Atomic Energy Act and
3 the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, better
4 known as NEPA.

5 The Atomic Energy Act authorizes the NRC
6 to regulate the civilian use of nuclear material. The
7 NRC regulations are contained in the Title 10 of the
8 Code of Federal Regulations, commonly called the
9 10 CFR. The Atomic Energy Act also authorizes the NRC
10 to grant a 40-year license for nuclear power reactors
11 and allows for renewal of these licenses.

12 It is important to note that the 40-year
13 license term was based primarily on economic
14 considerations and antitrust factors, not on safety or
15 technical limitations.

16 The second governing statute is NEPA of
17 1969. That established a national policy for
18 considering the impact of federal decisionmaking on
19 the environment. In exercising its authority, the NRC
20 mission is three-fold -- to ensure adequate protection
21 of public health and safety, to promote the common
22 security -- the common defense and security, and to
23 protect the environment.

24 The NRC accomplishes its mission through
25 a combination of regulatory program and processes,

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1 such as conducting inspections, issuing enforcement
2 actions, assessing licensee's performance, and
3 evaluating operating experience from nuclear
4 powerplants across the country and internationally.

5 One important element of our inspection
6 program is the resident inspector. NRC has resident
7 inspectors at all operating nuclear powerplants.
8 Their job is to carry out our safety mission on a
9 daily basis by ensuring that these plants have
10 acceptable safety performances and are in compliance
11 with the regulatory requirements. These inspectors
12 are considered to be the eyes and ears of the NRC.

13 Tonight we have in the audience the
14 resident inspector stationed at Wolf Creek, Mr. Jeremy
15 Groom. Thanks, Jeremy.

16 The current operating license for Wolf
17 Creek will expire March 11, 2025. On October 4, 2006,
18 Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation submitted an
19 application for renewal of the Wolf Creek operating
20 license for an additional 20 years. Copies of the
21 Wolf Creek license renewal application are available
22 for your review here at the Burlington Library.

23 Two guiding principles form the basis of
24 the NRC's approach in performing a safety review. The
25 first principle is that the current regulatory process

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1 is adequate to ensure that the licensing basis of all
2 operating plants provides and maintains an acceptable
3 level of safety. The second principle is that the
4 current plant-specific licensing basis must be
5 maintained during the renewal term in the same manner
6 and to the same extent as during the original
7 licensing term.

8 To ensure that the plant's current
9 licensing basis is maintained during the extended
10 period of extended operation, the effects of aging
11 must be understood and addressed.

12 The staff conducts a detailed review of
13 new and existing programs and surveillance activities
14 to determine, with reasonable assurance, that the
15 effects of aging for certain plant systems,
16 structures, and components, will be adequately managed
17 or monitored.

18 This slide shows the content of the
19 license renewal application submitted by Wolf Creek.
20 The staff reviews this information to verify that the
21 aging effects will be adequately managed, and the
22 environmental impacts are characterized and disclosed.

23 This is a diagram that represents the
24 license renewal review process. The top portion of
25 the diagram, or the lines and squares highlighted in

1 red, shows the safety process. The bottom portion of
2 the diagram, or squares and lines highlighted in green
3 -- the colors are not matching --

4 (Laughter.)

5 -- for some reason.

6 (Laughter.)

7 Well, the green one is the safety. The
8 blue or black one is the environmental process. These
9 two reviews are conducted simultaneously to evaluate
10 two important aspects of the license renewal
11 application.

12 The yellow figures represent an
13 opportunity for public involvement. Today we are in
14 the first yellow figure, and we are here to solicit
15 your comments on the scope of the environmental
16 review.

17 During the safety review, the staff
18 conducts audits to evaluate the adequacy of the
19 technical information in the license renewal
20 application. NRC's qualified inspectors perform
21 onsite inspections to verify that the applicant's
22 aging management programs and activities are
23 implemented or have been planned for implementation.

24 Then, the results of the safety review are
25 documented in a safety evaluation report and an

1 inspection report. The safety evaluation report is
2 then forwarded to the Advisory Committee on Reactor
3 Safeguards, or ACRS, who will perform an independent
4 review of the license renewal application and the
5 safety evaluation report.

6 The ACRS is a group of scientists and
7 nuclear experts who serve as the consulting body to
8 the Commission. They will report their findings and
9 recommendations directly to the Commission.

10 To perform the environmental review, the
11 staff conducts an onsite audit and generates a draft
12 and a final supplemental environmental impact
13 statement. In the second part of this presentation,
14 Christian Jacobs, the Project Manager for the
15 Environmental Group, will provide you with a detailed
16 overview of the environmental process.

17 In summary, for the safety review, we
18 basically review the application, we conduct onsite
19 audits and inspection, we document our conclusions in
20 a safety evaluation report and an inspection report.
21 Then, once the ACRS has completed their independent
22 review of both the license renewal application and the
23 safety evaluation report, the committee offers the
24 recommendation to the Commission regarding the
25 proposed action to renew an operating license.

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1 Before turning the presentation over to
2 Mr. Jacobs, I would like to mention a few important
3 areas of NRC oversight that are separate from the
4 license renewal review process. These areas include:
5 emergency planning, security, and current safety
6 performance.

7 The NRC monitors and provides regulatory
8 oversight of activities in these three areas in an
9 ongoing basis under the current operating license.
10 Therefore, we do not reevaluate them in license
11 renewal, because they are subject to ongoing NRC
12 inspections and oversight.

13 Any issues identified in these three areas
14 are addressed immediately under the current operating
15 license. For more information about the reactor
16 oversight process for operating reactors, you can
17 follow the link at the bottom of this page.

18 This concludes my remarks on the safety
19 review. Now I would like to introduce you to
20 Christian Jacobs, who will provide you with an
21 overview of the safety review -- I'm sorry,
22 environmental review.

23 MR. JACOBS: Hi. Good evening, everybody.
24 My name is Christian Jacobs. I'm an Environmental
25 Project Manager at the NRC. I'm responsible for

1 coordinating all of the environmental-related
2 activities between the NRC staff and the various
3 environmental experts that we have working for us,
4 both from our in-house staff and our contractor.

5 The result of these efforts will
6 ultimately produce an environmental impact statement
7 associated with the proposed license renewal for Wolf
8 Creek Generating Station. The National Environmental
9 Policy Act of 1969, NEPA, requires that all federal
10 agencies follow a systematic approach in evaluating
11 potential impacts associated with certain actions.

12 We at the NRC are required to consider the
13 impact of the proposed action and also any mitigation
14 for those impacts we consider to be significant. We
15 are also required to consider alternatives to the
16 proposed action -- in this case, the license renewal
17 of Wolf Creek -- and other alternatives, including the
18 no action alternative. In other words, if the NRC
19 decides not to approve the license renewal for Wolf
20 Creek, what are the environmental impacts?

21 The NRC has determined that an
22 environmental impact statement, or EIS, will be
23 prepared for any proposed license renewal of nuclear
24 plants. In preparing an EIS, the NRC conducts a
25 scoping process. The purpose of the scoping process

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1 is to identify any important issues and information to
2 be analyzed in depth.

3 We are now in the scoping process for Wolf
4 Creek, and we're here today gathering comments and
5 collecting public -- or gathering information and
6 collecting public comments on the scope of the review.
7 Simply put, what special issues should the staff
8 consider in preparing the environmental impact
9 statement for Wolf Creek? We not only need to
10 determine if there are significant issues, but also
11 identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues
12 that are not significant.

13 With that framework, I want to provide an
14 overview of an environmental review. In the 1990s,
15 the NRC staff developed a generic environmental impact
16 statement, or GEIS. The GEIS documented the
17 environmental impacts of renewing the operating
18 licenses for all the nuclear plants in the nation. As
19 a result of that analysis, the NRC was able to
20 determine that a number of environmental issues were
21 common or similar to all nuclear powerplants.

22 The environmental impacts associated with
23 those issues were found to be small at all sites. The
24 NRC staff will search for any new and significant
25 information that might call into question the

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1 conclusions that were previously reached in the GEIS
2 for those issues that were common to all powerplant
3 sites.

4 In addition, the NRC staff will also
5 search for new issues not addressed in the GEIS. The
6 NRC also concluded that there are several issues to
7 which a generic determination could not be reached,
8 and for these issues the NRC will prepare a site-
9 specific supplemental environmental impact statement,
10 or SEIS.

11 And that's why we're here today requesting
12 your comments on the scope of the site-specific
13 environmental statement for Wolf Creek. When the
14 review is completed, the GEIS and the site-specific
15 environmental impact statement will be the complete
16 record for the environmental review.

17 Next slide.

18 This diagram shows an overview of all the
19 subject matter areas that we'll be looking into and
20 we'll be evaluating during our review. You can see
21 all of those in the handouts that you received at the
22 registration table.

23 Next slide, please.

24 So how does the public provide input for
25 decisionmaking? This diagram shows all of the sources

1 of information that are used for the license renewal
2 decision. Today, we are here soliciting your comments
3 on the scope of the environmental review, and we will
4 consider all comments received during the scoping
5 period in developing the draft supplemental
6 environmental impact statement. That's how the
7 comments you provide here today will play into the
8 overall process.

9 Also, there's an opportunity to request a
10 hearing in the license renewal proceedings. This
11 opportunity for hearing closes on January 29, 2007,
12 and original information about the hearing process is
13 attached in the handouts that you received at the
14 registration table.

15 Specifically, if you look at the Federal
16 Register notice, it provides the information on how to
17 request a hearing in the proceedings. I would like to
18 clarify, though, that the hearing opportunity and the
19 public comments on the scope of the environmental
20 review are two different processes. Today we are here
21 to consider your comments on the scope of the
22 environmental review.

23 Next slide, please.

24 So there are several ways you can provide
25 comments on the scope of the environmental review.

1 You can provide comments today during the comment
2 period of this meeting, and those comments will carry
3 the same consideration as any other comment that you
4 might submit in writing.

5 If you are not ready to provide a comment
6 today, you can send your comments via regular mail.
7 The address is shown on the screen. It's also
8 included in your handouts.

9 You can also send us your comments to the
10 e-mail address that we have set up specifically for
11 requesting comments. It's WolfCreekEIS@nrc.gov. It's
12 also shown here. And you can also submit comments in
13 person at the NRC.

14 I want to mention that the scoping period
15 also closes on January 29, 2007. So to assure
16 consideration of your comments, we request that you
17 provide them by that date.

18 Next slide, please.

19 This is going to be interesting. All
20 right.

21 The proposed review schedule for Wolf
22 Creek is presented here, and it's posted on the NRC's
23 website, which is what I suggest you look at to see,
24 because all of the items highlighted in yellow --

25 (Laughter.)

1 Yes. Do we have asterisks next to them?
2 Yes, the stars. They're the opportunities for public
3 involvement. Right now, we are in the scoping
4 process, as I mentioned. And the scoping period, as
5 I said earlier, ends on January 29, 2007. The
6 opportunity for hearing also closes on that same date.

7 This information, again, was provided in
8 the Federal Register notice, and it's included in the
9 handouts. Once we receive your comments, we will
10 develop a scoping summary report that will provide
11 responses to all comments received and will indicate
12 how the comments will be addressed in our review. A
13 copy of the scoping summary report will be sent to you
14 if you provided your address at the registration
15 table.

16 We currently expect to issue that report
17 in May 2007. Over the next eight months, we will
18 develop the draft supplemental environmental impact
19 statement and issue a draft SEIS in August 2007.
20 There will be a 75-day period between August 24, 2007,
21 and November 7, 2007, for the public to provide
22 comments on the draft SEIS.

23 Another public meeting will be held, at
24 this same location here, the library, on October 3,
25 2007. The purpose of the October public meeting is to

1 present preliminary results of the staff's review and
2 solicit comments on the draft SEIS. All comments
3 received on the draft SEIS will be addressed and/or
4 incorporated into the final SEIS. The final SEIS will
5 be published in March 2008.

6 Next slide, please.

7 This slide points -- or this slide lists
8 the points of contact for the safety and environmental
9 reviews. It's also in your handouts. If you have
10 questions or need information, you can reach any of
11 the persons listed here.

12 Also, several documents, like the
13 application, the draft SEIS, the scoping summary
14 report, and the final SEIS, and some other documents
15 that we have yet -- that have yet to be produced will
16 be available at this library. You can also find those
17 documents at the NRC website, and the address is
18 listed at the bottom of the page.

19 This concludes my remarks, and I'd like to
20 turn the meeting back over to Steve Hoffman.

21 MR. HOFFMAN: Thank you, Christian. Thank
22 you, Veronica.

23 At this point, we'd like to take
24 questions, if anybody needs any clarification or
25 didn't understand anything.

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1 (No response.)

2 Okay. Then, we'll get the public comments
3 on the scoping of the environmental review, if there
4 are any.

5 (No response.)

6 Okay. Seeing no questions or comments,
7 I'm going to ask Rani Franovich to do the closing
8 portion.

9 MS. FRANOVICH: Thank you, Steve. I just
10 wanted to take the opportunity to thank everyone for
11 coming out tonight.

12 I know nobody had comments or questions
13 here tonight, but if you change your mind, you decide
14 you'd like to submit something, please feel free to do
15 so. Again, Veronica and Christian are the points of
16 contact, and their contact information is in the
17 handout.

18 I also wanted to remind everyone that the
19 opportunity for hearing and the opportunity to submit
20 comments on the scope of the environmental review
21 closes on January 29th.

22 And the last thing I wanted to mention is
23 that we have an NRC public meeting feedback form. You
24 may have gotten one of these when you registered at
25 the front table. If there's anything you can think of

1 that we can do to run these meetings better, ways we
2 can improve, ways we can do it different that could
3 better meet the needs of the audience, please let us
4 know. We'd be very interested in getting that
5 feedback from you.

6 You're welcome to leave it on the table or
7 give it to a member of the NRC staff, or you can fold
8 it up and mail it in. The postage is prepaid.

9 And with that, thank you all for coming,
10 and have a good night.

11 (Whereupon, at 7:24 p.m., the proceedings
12 in the foregoing matter were concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceedings before the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the matter of:

Name of Proceeding: Wolf Creek Nuclear
Public Scoping Meeting
Docket Number: 50-482
Location: Burlington, Kansas

were held as herein appears, and that this is the original transcript thereof for the file of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission taken by me and, thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under the direction of the court reporting company, and that the transcript is a true and accurate record of the foregoing proceedings.


Peggy Brown
Official Reporter
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