



NRC NEWS

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NRC ANNOUNCES OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST A HEARING ON OPERATING LICENSE FOR MOX FUEL PLANT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is announcing the opportunity to request a hearing on a proposed license for Shaw Areva MOX Services to operate a mixed-oxide fuel fabrication facility at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site in South Carolina.

Shaw Areva, formerly known as Duke, Cogema, Stone & Webster, submitted its application for the operating license Sept. 27 and supplemented it Nov. 7. The NRC staff has determined that the application contains sufficient information for the agency to begin its detailed technical review. The applicant submitted a non-proprietary version of the application, which may be viewed on the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html>.

Normally, the technical review and the opportunity to request a hearing would have been announced at the end of December. However, because the federal government was operating under a continuing resolution that fixed spending at Fiscal Year 2006 levels, those actions were delayed. Now that the NRC has received its funding for FY 2007, the review will proceed.

NRC staff will hold a public meeting April 12 in Aiken, S.C., to discuss the technical review process and the opportunity for members of the public to request an adjudicatory hearing. Details of the meeting will be announced closer to that date.

The MOX facility, which will be owned by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, is part of a bilateral effort between the United States and the Russian Federation to convert supplies of surplus weapons-grade plutonium into more proliferation-resistant forms by blending it with uranium. Converting the plutonium into MOX fuel will enable it to be used in commercial reactors to generate electricity. In the United States, only those reactors authorized by the NRC will be permitted to use MOX fuel.

The NRC issued a construction authorization for the facility March 30, 2005. During that licensing review, the NRC staff completed an Environmental Impact Statement on the construction and operation of the proposed facility. That report is available on the NRC Web site at the above address. Information on various public meetings held regarding the MOX facility is also available there.

A notice of opportunity to request a hearing was published today in the *Federal Register*. The deadline for requesting a hearing is May 14. Petitions may be filed by anyone whose interest may be affected by the license and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding.

A request for hearing and a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff. Requests may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 415-1101 or e-mail to HEARINGDOCKET@nrc.gov. A copy should also be submitted to the NRC Office of General Counsel, by facsimile to (301) 415-3725 or e-mail to OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov.

Information on the NRC's hearings process is available at this Web address:
<http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/adjudicatory/hearing.html>.

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