



NRC NEWS

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COMMISSION VOTE AUTHORIZES EARLY SITE PERMIT FOR GRAND GULF SITE IN MISSISSIPPI

By a 5-0 vote, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission today authorized the NRC's Office of New Reactors to issue an Early Site Permit (ESP) to System Energy Resources Inc. for the Grand Gulf ESP site near Port Gibson, Miss. The staff has 10 business days to carry out the Commission's directions and issue the permit, the second ESP the NRC has approved.

Successful completion of the ESP process resolves many site-related safety and environmental issues, and determines the site is suitable for possible future construction and operation of a nuclear power plant. The company filed its ESP application Oct. 21, 2003. The permit will be valid for up to 20 years. During that time, the company (or any other potential applicant interested in the site) must still seek NRC approval for a Combined License to build one or more nuclear plants on the site before any significant construction can occur.

The NRC staff's technical review of the Grand Gulf ESP application covered issues such as how the site's characteristics affect plant safety, environmental protection, and plans for coping with emergencies. The staff published a final safety evaluation and a final environmental impact statement for the Grand Gulf ESP in April 2006. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) conducted a hearing on the matter and ruled Jan. 26 that the permit could be issued.

The NRC issued the first-ever ESP for the Clinton site in Illinois on March 15. The NRC continues to work on two other ESP applications, North Anna in Virginia and Vogtle in Georgia. The staff has completed its technical review of the North Anna application, which is currently the focus of an ASLB hearing. The staff expects to issue a draft environmental impact statement and initial safety report on the Vogtle application by late summer.

Copies of the Grand Gulf ESP and related documents will be available on the agency's Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/esp/grand-gulf.html>. The documents are also available for inspection at the NRC's Public Document Room in Rockville, Md., and at the Harriette Person Memorial Library in Port Gibson.

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