

Official Transcript of Proceedings
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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 (Silex) Public Scoping Meeting:
 Evening Session

Docket Number: 70-7016

Location: Wilmington, North Carolina

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2009

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Pages 1-41

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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GENERAL ELECTRIC-HITACHI GLOBAL LASER ENRICHMENT

(SILEX) PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

Docket No. 70-7016

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Tuesday,

May 19, 2009

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Warwick Center

University of North Carolina-Wilmington

601 S. College Road

Wilmington, North Carolina

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The above-entitled meeting convened at
7:00 p.m., pursuant to notice, Chip Cameron,
facilitating.

Reporter: Matt Mawhinny

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1 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:
2 FRANCIS "CHIP" CAMERON
3 PATRICE M. BUBAR
4 LISA CLARK
5 DANIEL H. DORMAN
6 ROGER HANNAH
7 TIMOTHY C. JOHNSON
8 ANDREA KOCK
9 TARSHA MOON
10 A. CHRISTIANNE RIDGE
11 BRIAN W. SMITH
12 ANTOINETTE WALKER-SMITH
13 HAIMANOT YILMA
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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

7:00 p.m.

FACILITATOR CAMERON: Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the public meeting tonight. My name is Chip Cameron and I worked for the Executive Director for Operations at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or NRC, is what we're going to be calling it tonight and it's my pleasure to serve as your Facilitator for tonight's meeting and in that role, I'll try to help all of you to have a productive meeting tonight.

The subject of the meeting is the NRC's environmental review process for facilities that enrich uranium, better known as uranium enrichment facilities and we expect to get a license application from General Electric-Hitachi, to build and construct a uranium enrichment facility here in the Wilmington area.

They've already submitted their environmental report to us and we anticipate the complete license application, that is the safety report and the environmental report, sometime soon and the NRC staff will be talking to you in more detail about that tonight.

I just wanted to say a few words about the

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1 meeting process, so that you have an idea of what to
2 expect tonight and I'd like to first of all, talk
3 about format, then just state some simple ground rules
4 that will allow us to have a good meeting tonight, and
5 then I want to introduce the NRC staff who will be
6 talking to you tonight and are here to answer any
7 questions that you might have.

8 In terms of the format for the meeting,
9 it's really a two part format. First of all, we're
10 going to give you some background information on what
11 the NRC evaluates when it's making a decision on
12 whether to grant one of these license applications for
13 a uranium enrichment facility, and we have three brief
14 NRC presentations for you on that, not only on what
15 the process is, what the NRC evaluates, but how the
16 public can participate in that process.

17 So, we're going to go through the complete
18 process for you, the safety aspects, the environmental
19 aspects, but the focus of the meeting tonight is on
20 the NRC's environmental review, and that leads into
21 the second part of the meeting, which is an
22 opportunity for the NRC to listen to your advice, your
23 recommendations on what the NRC should look at when
24 it's conducting the environmental review, and that
25 public comment part of the meeting, anybody who wants

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1 to speak will be able to come up here and talk to all
2 of you in the audience and the NRC staff.

3 The NRC is also asking for written comment
4 on these issues, but anything that's said tonight will
5 have the same weight as a written comment and we have
6 a comment sheet, for those of you who don't want to
7 talk tonight, or don't want to prepare a written
8 comment, you can make notes on this comment sheet and
9 it also has all the details about how you can comment
10 in other ways, you can make notes on that and leave
11 it with the NRC staff tonight and that will be
12 considered as a formal comment.

13 In terms of ground rules for the meeting,
14 first of all, I would just ask that you allow the
15 three NRC speakers to finish all of their
16 presentations before you ask questions. We will have
17 time for questions after the NRC presentations, before
18 we get to the comment part of the meeting.

19 When we get to the questions, if you have
20 a question, just give me a signal and I'll bring this
21 cordless microphone to you and if you could just
22 introduce yourselves to us and we will get on trying
23 to answer your question, and I would ask that only one
24 person speak at a time. Two important reasons for
25 that, one, so that we can give our full attention to

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1 whomever has the floor at the moment, and secondly, so
2 that we can get a clean transcript.

3 We are taking a transcript of the meeting
4 and our Court Reporter tonight is Matt Mawhinney and
5 that transcript will be a public document. It will be
6 your record of what happened tonight. It will be the
7 NRC's record of what happened tonight.

8 So, if only one person is speaking at a
9 time, we'll know, Matt will know who that is and there
10 won't be any confusion involved.

11 I'm also going to ask you to follow a five
12 minute guideline in your formal comments, so that we
13 can make sure that we hear from everyone that wants to
14 talk tonight. I don't think that we're going to have
15 -- we're going to be pressed for time. So, that's not
16 a drop-dead rule. It's just a guideline for people
17 to follow tonight.

18 The NRC staff is not going to respond to
19 the comments that are made tonight. They're going to
20 listen carefully and then they're going to carefully
21 evaluate what was said tonight and all of that will be
22 in a report called the scoping report. You'll hear
23 more about that tonight.

24 Finally, just extend courtesy to
25 everybody. You may hear opinions tonight that differ

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1 from your own, and just please respect the person who
2 is giving that opinion and let me introduce the NRC
3 staff. I'm going to start with the presenters tonight
4 and first of all, we have Patty Bubar, who is right
5 here and Patty is the Deputy Director of the Division
6 of Waste Management and Environmental Protection and
7 the NRC and she's going to tell you a little bit about
8 the NRC and then we're going to move into the safety
9 review process, and we have Tim Johnson here, who is
10 the Project Manager for the safety review on this
11 license application.

12 Then, we're going to move the
13 environmental review and we have Christianne Ridge
14 here, who is the Project Manager on the environmental
15 review, and let me introduce some other people from
16 the NRC who are here tonight and this Andrea Kock, who
17 is the Chief of the Environmental Protection Branch,
18 and Andrea and her staff and Christianne is one of
19 her staff, they prepare -- they oversee the
20 preparation of the environmental review.

21 We have Brian Smith with us, who is the
22 Chief of the Uranium Enrichment Branch and Tim Johnson
23 is one of the Brian's staff, and then we have the --
24 we actually have the Division Director with us tonight
25 from the Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards Branch and

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1 that is the division that does the safety review.

2 We also brought one of our attorneys, Lisa
3 Clark from Office of General Counsel, in case you have
4 any legal questions or any questions related to legal
5 issues.

6 I should say, Roger Hannah, who is with
7 us, he's not right here now, but he's from our Public
8 Affairs staff at our Region II Office in Atlanta, and
9 we have Haimanot Yilma, who is another one of our
10 environmental experts and she is right over there, and
11 I think I have -- did I get everybody?

12 Okay, and I just wanted to introduce
13 people, so that when the formal part of the meeting is
14 over, if you have questions, anything you want to
15 discuss, the NRC staff will be here to discuss that
16 informally with you and now, I'm going to ask Patty,
17 I'll turn it over to Patty and we'll do the
18 presentations and then we'll see if there's any
19 questions.

20 MS. BUBAR: Thank you. Thank you, Chip and
21 good evening to everyone and thank you really for
22 coming this evening. Someone actually reminded me
23 that it's the finale of 'American Idol', so now that I
24 know that you guys have chosen to come here versus
25 'American Idol', we know where your priorities are.

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1 As Chip said, I'm just going to talk a
2 little bit about who is -- or what is the Nuclear
3 Regulatory Commission, what do we do and just kind of
4 set the stage for some of the more detailed
5 presentations from Tim and Christianne.

6 The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is an
7 independent Government agency and our mission is
8 safety. We are responsible for ensuring the
9 protection of the public and worker, health and safety
10 and what that means -- what being an independent
11 agency means is, our -- we are a Commission, first of
12 all, so, there's five slots for five Commissioners.
13 Currently, we have four of them filled. The decision
14 making process is done by the Commission. So, there
15 is always, you know, good debate that goes on amongst
16 the five of the Commissioners.

17 The Chairman of the NRC, who is one of the
18 Commissioners, is appointed by the President, but we
19 don't really report to the Executive Branch. So,
20 that's kind of where the independence comes from, and
21 the other -- or all the Commissioners are approved by
22 the Legislative Branch, by a Senate Committee, but our
23 day-to-day operations, day-to-day decisions are not
24 overseen by anybody in the political structure.

25 So, we are independent and those decisions

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1 about what is safe are made by the Commission.

2 We do not build, operate or promote
3 nuclear facilities. Our job is to -- if and when GE
4 submits the license application, our job is to review
5 that application from a safety and environmental
6 perspective and if it meets all of our requirements,
7 make a decision as to whether a license can be issued.

8 But we do not look at it from, you know, is it good
9 for energy production or you know, from a promotion
10 perspective. That's not in our mission.

11 Why are we here this evening? There is a
12 piece of legislation called the National
13 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA and that legislation
14 requires Federal agencies to consider the
15 environmental impacts of any decision or certain
16 actions that we take.

17 So, if we are presented with a license
18 application, the decision to issue or not issue that
19 license is considered a major Federal action, and so,
20 under the NEPA law, we have to evaluate the
21 environmental impacts of such that decision.

22 As I mentioned, being an independent
23 agency, we implement the NEPA legislation through our
24 own set of regulations, which you can find in the Code
25 of Federal Regulations, in Part 51.

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1 But it's exactly alike as to what's in the
2 NEPA law. So, we follow the NEPA law through our own
3 set of regulations.

4 We are conducting an environmental review,
5 as Chip had mentioned. We have received the -- or are
6 in receipt of environmental report from GE. So, that
7 has initiated the process to begin our environmental
8 impact statement, which will guide our decision as to
9 whether we issue a license or not.

10 Part of conducting that environmental
11 impact statement is involving the public. Not only is
12 it required, but it's really something that is part of
13 how we do our business.

14 So, that is really what this meeting is
15 all about this evening. We are beginning this
16 process. We are not in the middle, we're not in the
17 end. We are just at the beginning. This is a scoping
18 meeting, where we would like your input on what should
19 be in the scope of what we take a look at in our
20 environmental review. No decisions have been made at
21 this point.

22 So, this evening, we're just going to
23 spend a little bit of time giving you the background
24 on how we conduct our reviews and answer any questions
25 that you may have, but as Chip said, more importantly,

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1 open it up, so that we can get input from you on what
2 we should consider as we're doing that environmental
3 review.

4 So, I'm going to turn it over to Tim
5 Johnson, who is going to describe the safety part of
6 the review process.

7 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you very much. I
8 appreciate the opportunity to talk to you this
9 evening. This is a major licensing effort within our
10 agency and it's important for us to be here and get
11 your input for our environmental impact statement.

12 The purpose of my presentation is to give
13 you a brief summary of the project and then talk about
14 our licensing process and what we're going to do, in
15 terms of our review.

16 General Electric is proposing to construct
17 and operate a uranium enrichment plant, using a laser-
18 based technology at its site here in Wilmington. The
19 site is on Castle Hayne Road, near the intersection of
20 I-140. It uses technology that would be -- that has
21 been developed by the Australians and GE has
22 contracted with them to develop that further into a
23 commercial facility.

24 What is enrichment? Well, enrichment is
25 increasing concentration of one of the uranium

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1 isotopes, in this case, Uranium-235, from its natural
2 concentrations to a concentration that can be used in
3 the power plants that are used in this country.

4 If you'll go back to your high school
5 chemistry, you probably remember that elements have --
6 can contain a number of different isotopes and for
7 uranium, the two primary isotopes in natural uranium
8 are Uranium-235, which is fissionable, and that's the
9 isotope that makes a reactor work, and Uranium-238,
10 which is not fissionable.

11 Naturally occurring, when you dig uranium
12 out of the ground, the percentage of Uranium-235 is
13 0.7 percent and it needs to be in the three to five
14 percent range to be usable in today's reactors and
15 this is done through the enrichment process

16 The product of the GE facility will end up
17 being used for fuel for nuclear power plants.

18 Now, uranium is a pretty common element in
19 the earth's crust, and there are a number of locations
20 in the world where the concentrations are high enough
21 where you can economically mine that material and
22 it's mined as an oxide form and after it's separated
23 from the other material, other rock, it's chemically
24 converted into a compound called uranium hexafluoride
25 and it's uranium hexafluoride compound that's used in

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1 the enrichment process.

2 In the United States, we've been enriching
3 uranium since the 1940's. There's currently one
4 operating plant in the United States, and that's in
5 Paducah, Kentucky, and it uses a process called
6 gaseous diffusion. Gaseous diffusion, however, is a
7 very expensive process to operate. It is very energy
8 intensive and there has been a great deal of work
9 looking at other alternatives that are less expensive
10 to perform the same work.

11 In Europe, they use gaseous diffusion and
12 a technique called gas centrifuge. The Europeans have
13 used the gas centrifuge technology for over 35 years
14 and there are currently two plants licensed by the NRC
15 that are under construction. One is being built in
16 New Mexico and the other is being built in Portsmouth,
17 Ohio.

18 We also recently received another
19 application for a facility that's proposed outside of
20 Idaho Falls, Idaho.

21 But GE is proposing a different process,
22 one that based on a laser system and GE is going to
23 propose to enrich Uranium-235 up to eight percent.
24 Now, these enrichment levels are well below those that
25 are needed for nuclear weapons.

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1 Nuclear weapons grade material is 90+
2 percent Uranium-235, so, what GE is going to produce
3 are well below anything that could be used for nuclear
4 weapons.

5 The product from the enrichment plant at
6 GE would then be shipped to fuel fabrication facility,
7 where the Uranium hexafluoride will be chemically
8 converted into an oxide form. The material would be
9 pressed into pellets and loaded
10 into control rods and ultimately, shipped to nuclear
11 power plants as fuel and one of the fuel fabrication
12 plants is one that has been operating since 1967 at
13 the GE facility on Castle Hayne Road.

14 The laser enrichment process is one that's
15 new. The physics have been demonstrated but there
16 really has never been built, a commercial facility
17 that can take the physics and actually be a
18 commercially viable project.

19 So, the first phase that General Electric
20 has undertaken is a demonstration plant and in May
21 2008, NRC licensed GE to build and use this
22 demonstration facility, which is also at Wilmington.
23 This test loop is currently under construction and
24 they plan on beginning operations later this year.

25 The second phase would be licensing the

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1 commercial scale facility and in order to build and to
2 operate such a facility, it needs an NRC license and
3 we're an independent agency, responsible for public
4 health and safety, for commercial uses of nuclear.

5 We're independent, in that we're not a
6 part of the Executive Branch of Government. We're an
7 independent agency that reports directly to Congress.

8 Most of our work is with commercial uses of
9 radioactive materials. We actually have no authority
10 over Department of Energy facilities, other than a
11 handful of cases where Congress has specifically given
12 us the responsibility to license those facilities.

13 But for most of the DOE operations, NRC
14 has no regulatory authority over those and our focus
15 is on the safety of commercial uses of radioactive
16 materials.

17
18 Again, we're not a promoter of this
19 technology or any applicant or licensee. Our focus is
20 strictly on the safe use of radioactive materials.

21 One of the requirements for enrichment
22 facilities is that the facility can't begin
23 construction until after a license has been issued.

24 Now, there may be some pre-construction
25 activities that take place, such as clearing of land

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1 or building administrative buildings, but these are
2 all activities that fall outside of our jurisdiction
3 and that doesn't necessarily mean that those buildings
4 aren't being properly permitted. If GE does do these
5 pre-construction activities, they still need to the
6 appropriate permits from the local, state or Federal
7 Government, as needed for those activities.

8 One aspect of the facility that's very
9 important is laser safety and NRC does not have
10 a regulatory role over -- or authority, over laser
11 safety. At the Federal level, the authority for that,
12 for regulating lasers, is with the Occupational Safety
13 and Health Administration, and they have a delegation
14 program where they've delegated their regulatory
15 responsibility to the State of North Carolina,
16 Department of Labor.

17 So, for this type of facility that does
18 use lasers, the laser safety aspects will be regulated
19 by the North Carolina Department of Labor.

20 In January of this year, GE submitted to
21 the NRC, an environmental report. This is a document
22 that helps us in developing our environmental impact
23 statement. They expect to submit the license
24 application to us at the end of next month and when we
25 get that license application, we will perform a

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1 technical review of it and document the results of
2 that review, in what we call a safety evaluation
3 report and before we can issue a license, we have to
4 ensure that the programs that are in place at GE will
5 properly protect the health and safety of both workers
6 and the public.

7 Another one of our responsibilities is our
8 preparation of an environmental impact statement, and
9 Christianne Ridge will talk more about that and this
10 is, again, part of the reason why we're here, is to
11 get input that will ultimately go into that
12 environmental impact statement.

13 Our technical review will take about 18
14 months to complete. We'll review the application.
15 We'll send out requests for additional information if
16 it's needed, and then we'll prepare our safety
17 evaluation report to document what we reviewed and our
18 determinations on it.

19 The kinds of areas that are covered under
20 that would be chemical safety, fire protection,
21 radiation safety, criticality safety, waste management
22 issues, physical security issues and so on.

23 As part of a licensing process for a
24 uranium enrichment facility, there is also a special
25 type of hearing, called a mandatory hearing and in

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1 this mandatory hearing, a panel of
2 Administrative Law Judges will review our final
3 environmental impact statement and our safety
4 evaluation report, and will determine whether or not
5 those reviews were performed in an adequate way.

6 A large part of our licensing process
7 deals with public involvement and last July, we had a
8 public meeting here on this campus and we talked about
9 our licensing process. This was shortly after GE
10 announced its decision to site this facility in
11 Wilmington.

12 But there are also other opportunities for
13 public interaction and one of the most important ones
14 is shortly after we receive the application, and if
15 it's acceptable for review, there will be a Federal
16 Register notice that's issued, that will offer the
17 public an opportunity to petition for a hearing and
18 the term we use is called a contested hearing and by
19 hearing, I'm referring to something that is a very
20 formal, judicial process.

21 It's not a meeting, such as this, where
22 people can just make comments or statements. This is
23 a formal judicial process that is held before a panel
24 of Administrative Law Judges that are set up
25 specifically to litigate NRC licensing issues.

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1 In order to participate in this process, a
2 party needs to demonstrate two things. One is
3 something called standing and standing is, you have to
4 show that you would be affected by the licensing
5 decision and to be admitted as a party, you also need
6 to present at least one admissible contention and a
7 contention is a fact of law or technical fact, that
8 you disagree with or you wish to litigate. It has to
9 be specific. It has to be within the Agency's
10 jurisdiction and at least one contention needs to be
11 presented, as well as standing, in order for a party
12 to be admitted to a hearing.

13 Other aspects of public interaction
14 involve the environmental review process, and
15 Christianne will talk about that. One of those
16 meetings is the one we're having tonight on the
17 scoping, where our objective is to get input of areas
18 that need to be considered as part of our EIS
19 development.

20 We'll also have another meeting here to
21 take your comments on a draft environmental impact
22 statement, and again, Christianne will go into more
23 detail about that process and what will be done for
24 that.

25 We also plan a public meeting after we

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1 complete our final environmental impact statement and
2 our safety evaluation report and the purpose of this
3 meeting will be to discuss with you, what we found in
4 our reviews, environmental and technical, and to talk
5 about our determinations.

6 Lastly, if it turns out that a license is
7 issued for this facility, we would plan another public
8 meeting to come out and talk about the inspection
9 program that the NRC would undertake during
10 construction and during operations.

11 This next slide presents some information
12 on where to provide more material about uranium
13 enrichment or this specific project. These are two
14 websites that we have. The addresses are provided
15 here for you and they provide additional information
16 that may be useful to you.

17 Lastly, here is some contacts, my phone
18 number and e-mail address, and also for Christianne
19 Ridge, for environmental review questions that you
20 might have.

21 So, again, if you have any questions or
22 want additional information, please feel free to
23 contact us and we'll do our best to try to get that
24 information to you.

25 So, in summary, I've talked about, a

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1 little about the project, our licensing process, your
2 opportunities to participate and also, given you some
3 contact information. So, now, I'll turn it over to
4 Christianne Ridge, and she'll give you more
5 information about the environmental impact statement
6 process. Thank you.

7 MS. RIDGE: Thank you, Tim. Well, as Tim
8 indicated, I'm going to talk environmental review
9 process and I'm going to try to wrap this up because
10 we're really here tonight to listen. It seems like
11 we're here to talk, but we're really here to listen.

12 So, I'm just going to jump right in. Many
13 of you might be familiar with this site. General
14 Electric has a site already up near Castle Hayne,
15 where they have a couple of facilities up there. One
16 of them is a fuel manufacturing facility.

17 This map comes from General Electric's
18 environmental report. Tim mentioned that General
19 Electric-Hitachi had submitted, in January, an
20 environmental report and there are a couple of things
21 I want to say about that and one is that it's
22 publically available.

23 So, you might not be able to read the
24 bottom of the slide, but the hand-outs are available
25 in the front and this text down here gives you a way,

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1 from our website, to access that. There's a website
2 to go to and an access number to put in and you can
3 get their environmental report.

4 Now, the other thing that I want to say
5 about that is that is General Electric-Hitachi's
6 product. It's not something that the Nuclear
7 Regulatory Commission wrote. They gave that to us, to
8 give us a place to start with our review and they have
9 outlined what they think the environmental impacts of
10 their proposed action, which is building this
11 enrichment facility, what those environmental impacts
12 will be.

13 We're going to do our own review and this
14 gives us a place to start, but everything that we
15 include in our environmental impact statement, which
16 is how we summarize our environmental review,
17 everything that's in there, we're going to
18 independently analyze and verify for ourselves. So, I
19 just want to point out the difference between those
20 two documents.

21 Another important difference is of course
22 that they have submitted theirs to us and we're at the
23 beginning of our process of writing our environmental
24 impact statement and doing our environmental review.

25 So, we're here tonight at the beginning of

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1 our process, to get your input early.

2 Patty covered why we're here and mentioned
3 that we're required to have public involvement by the
4 National Environmental Policy Act, but we're really
5 here because we're making this decision. We're
6 conducting this environmental review as one part of
7 our decision about whether or not we can give General
8 Electric-Hitachi a license for this proposed facility.

9 Now, Tim talked about the other important
10 part of our decision, which is the safety review. But
11 the environmental review is also a part of that
12 decision and we're here because your comments are
13 going to help us to understand what we need to cover
14 in that environment review.

15 We, of course, have ideas already about
16 what we're going to cover, but you are the experts on
17 the local area. So, we want to make sure we
18 understand what's important in the local area and make
19 sure we address that in our environmental review.

20 So, our four goals for being here tonight
21 are to ensure that your concerns are identified early,
22 so that we have time to do them justice and study them
23 properly. We want to identify alternatives to the
24 proposed action and when I say alternatives, these can
25 be big things or small things.

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1 So, for example, General Electric-Hitachi
2 has proposed to build this uranium enrichment
3 facility. Well, one alternative would be to build a
4 facility that enriches uranium in a different way.

5 They've proposed using a laser technology,
6 that Tim talked about. There are other ways to do it,
7 and so, one alternative might be, "Well, they should
8 do this some other way," another type of alternative
9 that would be a sort of rather large alternative would
10 be, "They could do this somewhere else. They don't
11 need to do this near Wilmington."

12 Alternatives can also be smaller things,
13 for instance, General Electric-Hitachi is going to
14 have to construct this facility. You might have
15 opinions about when they conduct that construction or
16 how they get the trucks into this site. These might
17 be other alternatives that could be considered.

18 We're also here to identify any
19 significant issues, and that's another important place
20 where you come in, to identify anything that you think
21 is going to be significant of us to cover, and to
22 eliminate unimportant issues, and the reason we do
23 that is not to cut corners or make our review any
24 quicker, but the more we can focus on what's actually
25 important, the more useful this document is going to

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1 be to you and to us, in forming our decision.

2 So, I've mentioned this acronym and I hope
3 I mentioned the words, this EIS, the Environmental
4 Impact Statement, and that's the document we're
5 writing to summarize our environmental review.

6 An EIS describes the environmental impact
7 of the proposed action and its alternatives. So,
8 there are certain alternatives I discussed that might
9 be considered and we talk about the impacts, not just
10 of the proposed action, but also, these alternatives.

11 An EIS, the function of it is to provide
12 information to two important groups and one important
13 group is the public. This is a public process and
14 this is a public document. So, when we're done
15 writing a draft, we're going to make that public and
16 we're going to come back here and we're going to ask
17 you for your opinions about it and when we finish the
18 document and we have final one, that's also going to
19 be public.

20 Now, the other important group is internal
21 to our agency. The environmental impact statement
22 helps inform this decision about whether or not we can
23 give General Electric-Hitachi a license.

24 An environmental impact statement
25 addresses five main areas. It addressed the proposed

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1 action, including the purpose for the action, the
2 reason for doing it. It addresses alternatives for
3 the action, including not doing anything. I mean, one
4 of our options is to not grant a license, and we would
5 talk about the impacts of that.

6 Now, I said that we're going to talk about
7 the purpose of the action, and that's really important
8 because it helps inform what alternatives could be.

9 So, for instance, you might say, "Well,
10 one alternative, General Electric-Hitachi wants to
11 build a uranium facility, you know, maybe they should
12 build a movie theater. Maybe they should build a
13 shopping mall."

14 These aren't really alternatives to the
15 proposed activity, because they don't fulfill the same
16 purpose.

17 So, part of what we want to be very clear
18 about is the purpose of the facility and that really
19 helps inform what reasonable alternatives to the
20 action would be.

21 We're going to talk about the affected
22 environment and so, that really gives us the scope,
23 you know, physically, in space and actually, in time
24 as well, of what we need to consider. So, you know,
25 how far out do these effects go? Do they go to the

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1 river? Do they go past the river? Do they go into the
2 next county. And there are different types of effects
3 that I'm going to talk about in a minute, and those
4 effects might have different physical scopes that they
5 encompass. So, we do actually spend a fair amount of
6 time talking about the affected environment and what
7 its current state is, before we talk about the impacts
8 and the way the proposed action might affect the
9 current environment.

10 I've talked a lot about impacts so far.
11 I'm going to talk a little bit more about them, and we
12 also talk about mitigative measures, and those are --
13 that's just a way to say, if there are going to be
14 impacts, what might we do to mitigate those impacts or
15 to lessen them?

16 So, for instance, if one of the impacts
17 was going to be noise during construction, one way to
18 mitigate that might to be perform construction only at
19 certain times of the day, not too early in the
20 morning, not too late at night.

21 Another way to do it might be to pick
22 special equipment that would make less noise than
23 other choices of equipment. So, these are types of
24 mitigative measures that we would talk about,
25 obviously, not just for noise, but for other areas as

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1 well.

2 These impacts can be direct, what we call
3 direct, indirect or cumulative and direct effects are
4 pretty easy to understand. A direct effect might be,
5 you release something into the air and that has an
6 effect on a neighbor who breathes it in. That would
7 be a direct effect.

8 An indirect effect is something that's
9 removed in time or in space. So, for instance, if
10 General Electric-Hitachi does something on the site
11 today, and there's no direct effect now, but later,
12 there is an effect, so let's see, if they were to
13 start employing a lot of people at the plant and then
14 that creates more people coming in and that creates
15 more shopping in the area and then you have more
16 people coming in for that and that creates traffic, if
17 you go through all those different pathways and it's
18 removed in space and it happens a lot later, that's an
19 indirect effect, and we try to touch on that too.
20 Obviously, that's a bit more complex than the direct
21 effects.

22 The last thing is cumulative effects, and
23 that's really taking this action and putting it in the
24 context of other actions that are going on around it.

25 So, for instance, if General Electric-

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1 Hitachi is going to take some water out of the ground
2 water aquifer, that might be a small effect for their
3 one plant, and again, I'm not saying it is, because we
4 haven't done our review yet. But for example, if that
5 were, we were going to say a small effect. If their
6 neighbor up a little further to the north and their
7 neighbor a little further to the south were also
8 taking out ground water, that might start to add up
9 into a significant impact on the aquifer.

10 So, we do try to put these effects in
11 context and that's really all cumulative effects
12 means.

13 I talked a little bit about the scope in
14 space and where the -- the area we might look at. As
15 far as time, the scope in time, we do look at -- we
16 try to look at the complete life cycle, so we look at
17 the construction of the facility, its operation and
18 also, its decommissioning and decommissioning just
19 means when GE-Hitachi is finished with the plant, how
20 do they clean up and take the buildings down and
21 decontaminate anything that's gotten contaminated.
22 So, we do try to look through that whole process.

23 I've mentioned impacts a few times. Some
24 example review areas, when I say environmental
25 impacts, are going to be pretty obvious to you, things

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1 like anything that's released into the air or the
2 water, any effects there are on animals or plants at
3 the site, that's probably what you would think of when
4 I say environmental impacts.

5 We also look at public and worker health.
6 Now, this is one of the areas where our review
7 overlaps with the safety review that Tim talked about
8 and the safety review Tim talked about is the primary
9 place where you're going to look at public and worker
10 health. But we do also address that as an
11 environmental impact.

12 We also look at -- we interpret this
13 definition of environment, the affected environment,
14 rather broadly. So, we also look at any impacts on
15 historic structures that are on the site, any
16 archeological remains that are on the site, any other
17 those types of artifacts. We look at things like
18 effects on economic resources, cultural resources,
19 social services.

20 So, for example, if a lot of people came
21 in to this new facility to work, that might put a
22 strain on the school system. Again, I'm not saying
23 that it does, because we haven't done our review yet.

24 But this is an example of a type of strain on a
25 social service -- an effect on a social service that

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1 might happen.

2 There might be more traffic on the roads.

3 That would be an example of a sort of a social
4 resource that's getting impacted.

5 We also look at something we call
6 environmental justice and that just means if any of
7 these other impacts that I talk about have a
8 disproportionate effect on a minority group or a low
9 income group, that, you try to pay special attention
10 to, and so, we've given it its own name and we call
11 that an environmental justice issue.

12 So, this slide has a lot of information on
13 it and I'm just going to walk through it very briefly.

14 Because it's so busy, I've just tried to highlight
15 two parts of the process, to draw your attention to
16 and these are opportunities for public input.

17 One of those is what we're doing here
18 tonight. That first block up there is to begin the
19 scoping period and hold public scoping meetings and we
20 had a meeting this afternoon. This is our second
21 public scoping meeting.

22 But we also have a period open for written
23 comments, and that started a couple of weeks ago and
24 it's going to end June 8th. So, if you leave this
25 meeting tonight and you think, "You know, I really

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1 wish I had said something about a certain topic,"
2 well, there is plenty of time and I'm going to give
3 more information at the end of my talk on where to
4 write to us. But we are taking written comments and
5 that's what we call our public scoping period. It's
6 to get your input on topics we should cover.

7 So, that's where we are now. Now, what
8 we've already accomplished, Tim mentioned that the
9 applicant has submitted an environmental report and
10 we've already looked at that very briefly, to say,
11 there's enough information here to start an in depth
12 review, and we found that it did.

13 So, we've started our review and we start
14 scoping, which is where we are now, and now at the
15 same time we're doing this, we engage other agencies,
16 local, state and Federal agencies and we engage
17 agencies that have special expertise in a certain area
18 and especially agencies that GE-Hitachi needs to go to
19 for other permits, because ours isn't the only license
20 they need. They're going to need certain state
21 permits for anything they put into the air, water or
22 when they disrupt the land, for a number of other
23 things as well. They're going to need local county
24 permits for some of their activities and they're going
25 to need other Federal permits, for instance, if

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1 there's any impact on wetlands, they're going to need
2 -- they might need to interact with certain agencies,
3 Federal agencies, to get permits, special permits for
4 that.

5 So, a number of other Federal, state and
6 local agencies that they're going to need to get input
7 from and permits from, and legal permission to do
8 things, and we interact with those agencies, so that
9 we understand the complete environmental picture. And
10 it's also actually a very convenient resource because
11 we're going to talk about this all in our
12 environmental impact statement and that's a public
13 document.

14 So, if you're interested in any of that,
15 this is a good central location to find out all the
16 permissions that they needed to get from various
17 people to go forward.

18 After this meeting tonight and also after
19 the public comment period closes, we're going to
20 summarize all the comments we get now or in writing
21 and we're going to address those in a -- publish a
22 scoping summary report, and so, in our scoping summary
23 report, we're going to say what comments we got and
24 we're going to talk about whether or not we're going
25 to be able to address them in the draft environmental

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1 impact statement.

2 After we've published that -- and I would
3 like to point out also that that scoping summary
4 report is also a public document. So, you can see how
5 we address those comments.

6 After that, we're going to identify and
7 analyze the environmental impacts and that's all going
8 to get summarized in a draft environmental impact
9 statement. That is a public document and we're going
10 to have another scoping period -- I'm sorry, not a
11 scoping period, another public comment period, I mis-
12 spoke, another public comment period where you can
13 submit written comments. We're going to come back and
14 we're going to have another couple of meetings about
15 the draft EIS. We're going to ask you how you think
16 we did.

17 If there's anything important we left out,
18 that's another opportunity for you to tell us that we
19 need to cover something that we didn't cover. So,
20 that is our second green box there, another
21 opportunity for public input.

22 Now, when we publish the final
23 environmental impact statement, we then move into the
24 more formal, legal process that Tim talked about. So,
25 sort of shaded that a light green, because that is a

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1 public process, but it's a lot harder to get involved
2 in and that's the legal process that Tim talked about.

3 So, these are some ways you can get more
4 information about the project. Tim gave you one of
5 our websites about -- or gave you the address for our
6 website about the project. That's a good way to do
7 that.

8 If you want even more information, you can
9 go to our electronic library, and in that electronic
10 library, most of the things we do, letters we write,
11 any interactions with the applicant, most of that is
12 public and you can put in this docket number. There's
13 going to be a search bar where you can put in this
14 document number and you get probably more information
15 than you even care to, about this project and
16 everything that's been made public, related to this
17 project.

18 Now, if you just want to look at the
19 environmental report, that's currently available right
20 now at the New Hanover County Library and when we
21 write our public scoping report that's going to come
22 out of this scoping period, the scoping summary
23 report, and when we write the draft environmental
24 impact statement and the final environmental impact
25 statement, we'll send those to the library too. So,

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1 you'll be able to see all of that, if that's the way
2 you want to do that.

3 You can also, of course, contact us. If
4 your question is about licensing or the safety side,
5 Tim is the right person to talk to. If your question
6 or concern is about the environmental review, I'm the
7 right person to talk to, and you can write us an e-
8 mail or give us a phone call.

9 This is the last and also most important
10 slide of my presentation, because we are here to get
11 your comments, and so, I just want to remind you that
12 you can make a formal comment by speaking at this
13 meeting tonight. Chip mentioned we're transcribing it.

14 So, any of those comments have the same weight as a
15 letter you would write to us.

16 You can fill out one of the forms that
17 Chip mentioned and there are two forms. One is to
18 tell us how we did at the meeting and it has questions
19 about whether or not you thought this was a good
20 meeting and there's another form to give us comments
21 on the environmental -- the scope of the environmental
22 impact statement and that's got questions you can
23 answer and give us your opinions about what you think
24 should go into the environmental review.

25 If you want to write us an e-mail, you can

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1 write to us at GLE.EIS@nrc.gov and if you want to
2 write us a letter, the address is up there too.

3 So, we've said enough and I'd like to turn
4 it over to Chip, who is going to open it up for public
5 comments. Thank you.

6 FACILITATOR CAMERON: Thank you very much,
7 Christianne, thanks, Tim and Patty. You've just heard
8 an overview of the NRC review process for the license
9 application. Are there any questions on all of this?
10 Does anybody have a question that we can answer for
11 you?

12 Okay, well, let's move to see if there is
13 anybody who has a comment tonight. We didn't have
14 anybody fill out a yellow card and sign up to comment,
15 but that's not absolutely -- it's not required.
16 Anybody want to make a -- join us up here and make a
17 comment relative to the scope of the environmental
18 review?

19 There's still 10 minutes until 'American
20 Idol', so I guess -- thanks, Patty, for telling us
21 that. I'm going to ask Patty to -- we are going to be
22 here after we close formally. So, we're here for
23 discussion and I'm just going to ask Patty to close
24 the meeting out for us and there is the opportunity --
25 yes, sir? I'm sorry, let me get you on the

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1 transcript.

2 MR. WEBBON: Hi, I'm Waylon Webbon and I
3 live in the neighborhood of the GE-Hitachi plant and I
4 also work at the GE-Hitachi plant. Actually, I've
5 already submitted my comments in writing, so you have
6 them.

7 But I just would like to mention again,
8 one of the concerns that I have is just the value of
9 the property that we have there and I just want to
10 make sure it isn't overlooked in some way, and that
11 was the gist of the comments that I had made, to
12 consider the economic impacts and to consider
13 environmental impact and not just now, but in the
14 future and the ability to re-sell and to move and that
15 kind of thing.

16 Being adjacent to an enrichment facility,
17 now, I have every confidence in GE. I've worked
18 there. I think they have a great safety record, but
19 there may be people that would be interested in a
20 house in our neighborhood, for example, that wouldn't
21 be, because of the fact that there is an enrichment
22 facility next door.

23 I wouldn't want this kind of thing to ever
24 stop this kind of development. I think development is
25 a good thing. But just want to make sure that it

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1 isn't overlooked and that we do maintain or attempt to
2 maintain the value of the property. I think there's
3 something like 60 home owners in that very adjacent
4 community, to the GE-Hitachi plant, and other than
5 that, that's all I wanted to say.

6 FACILITATOR CAMERON: Thank you very much,
7 Waylon and it's often good that people reiterate or
8 talk at the public meeting about their comments
9 because even though you submitted a written comment to
10 the NRC, the NRC knows that, but often it's useful for
11 other members of the community who are in the meeting
12 to hear about concerns like that. So, thank you very
13 much. Anybody else want to make a comment before we
14 close the formal part of the meeting? Okay, and thank
15 you, all. Thank you for listening, and Patty, do you
16 want to close this out?

17 MS. BUBAR: We do appreciate your taking
18 the time. Hopefully, your objectives in coming here
19 were achieved. I think our objectives were achieved,
20 where we wanted to provide some information about our
21 processes, but also, how you can become engaged in
22 them.

23 As Christianne said, we're beginning this.
24 If you make a comment this evening, we have the
25 comment cards. Also, I think Chip had mentioned this,

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1 if you have any comments or suggestions on how to run
2 these meetings differently, we would like to hear that
3 too, and there's a form for you to fill out for that,
4 so that we can get your input on that.

5 We all plan on staying here for as long as
6 you may need us. So, we'll be here to answer any
7 questions that maybe didn't get brought up during the
8 meeting and feel free to use any of the other
9 resources that were provided this evening, in terms of
10 getting your questions answered or providing input to
11 us and we look forward to having more dialog with you,
12 as we continue our reviews.

13 So, with that, we will formally close the
14 meeting, but we will all remain here to answer any
15 questions you may have, so, thank you.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
17 concluded at approximately 7:55 p.m.)
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