

**U.S. NRC**

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

*Protecting People and the Environment*

# **The Final GEIS**

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2009 NMA/NRC Uranium Recovery Workshop

# Purpose of the GEIS

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- Avoid unnecessary duplicative efforts in reviews of ISL applications
- Identify issues of concern to focus on in site-specific environmental reviews
- Allow option for use/continued use of ISL process in uranium recovery

# Need for the GEIS

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- Volume of expected applications for new ISL licenses, restarts and expansions of existing ISL facilities
- Environmental review required for each of these types of licensing actions

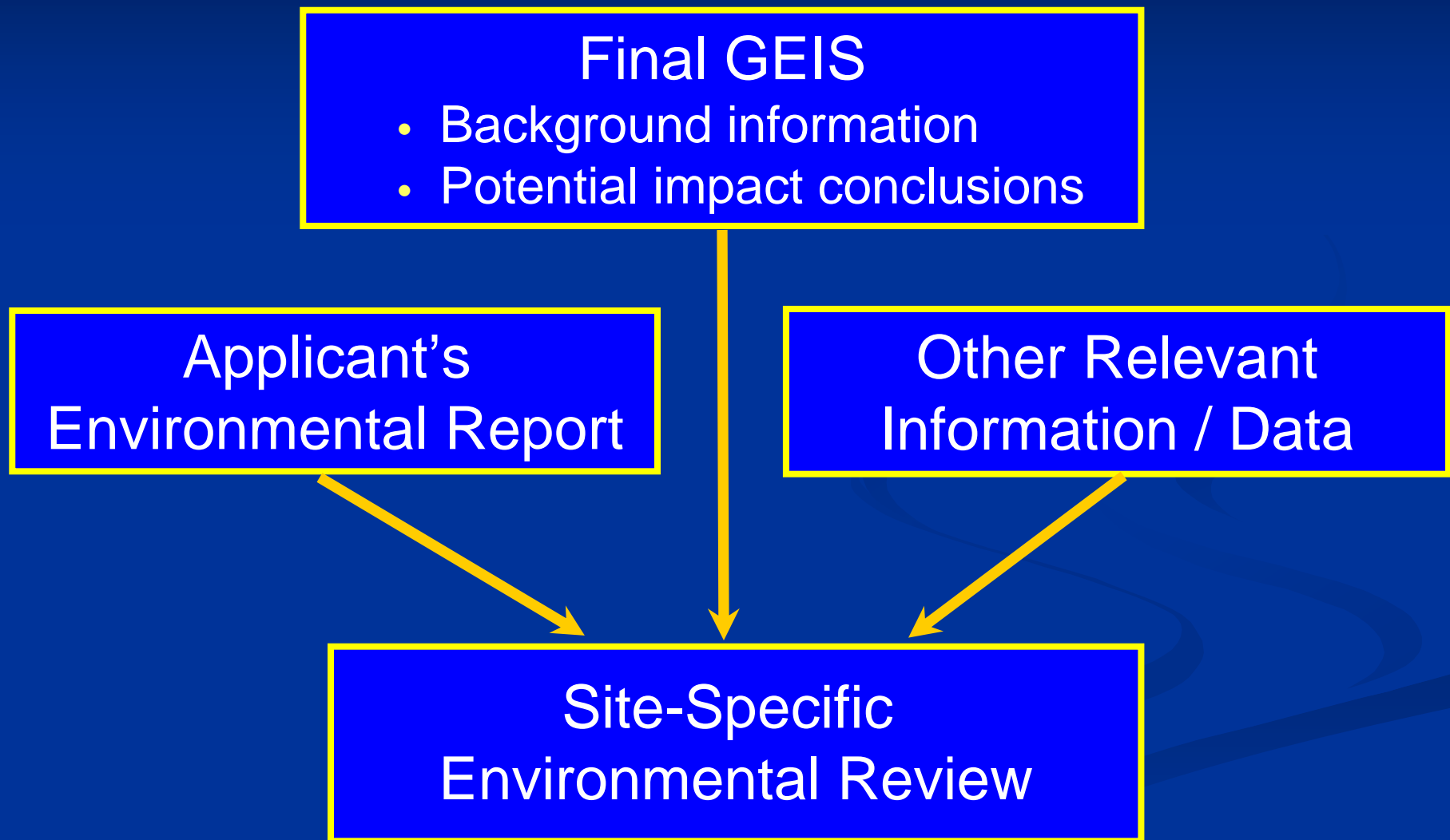
# Scope of the GEIS

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- Address the construction, operation, aquifer restoration, and decommissioning of an ISL facility
- Evaluate potential environmental impacts to 13 specific resource areas

# Use of the GEIS

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# Public Comments on Draft GEIS

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- Draft GEIS issued on July 28, 2008. Public comments received through November 7, 2008
- Approximately 2,200 comments identified
- Comments focused predominantly on purpose & need for the GEIS, use of the GEIS, regulatory issues, and groundwater issues

# Revisions to the GEIS

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- Clarified purpose and need
- Clarified use of GEIS in site-specific reviews
- Clarified proposed action and alternatives
- Added that an SEIS will be conducted for new ISL site-specific reviews
- Clarified when draft EAs may be issued for public comment
- Clarified groundwater restoration standards

# Revision to New LA Strategy

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- Original strategy: Issue Environmental Assessments (EAs) when appropriate
- Draft GEIS public comments: (1) Evaluations not based on site-specific information and (2) public involvement limited for EAs
- Revised strategy: Issue Supplemental environmental impact statements (SEISs) on all new applications



# What is the Difference Between a SEIS and an EA?

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- Potential 30-day increase in the public comment period on draft document
- Need to send SEIS to EPA for grading and wait 30 days before a final decision is made
- No scoping required for either an EA or SEIS
- No significant increase in the level of detail of analysis

# Considerations

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- The revised strategy:
  - Continues to permit efficiencies in NRC's review process
  - Is responsive to public comments
  - More clearly meets Part 51 licensing requirements
  - Does not result in significant schedule adjustments for new LA reviews
  - Provides for a more stable review schedule

# Conclusions

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- GEIS as starting point for site-specific environmental reviews
- Decision to prepare SEISs for new LAs
  - some impacts to schedule
  - more certainty in the schedule for completion
  - enhanced public confidence in licensing process