

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

Before Administrative Judges:

Paul S. Ryerson, Chairman  
Dr. James F. Jackson  
Dr. Michael O. Garcia

In the Matter of

GE-HITACHI GLOBAL LASER ENRICHMENT  
LLC

(GLE Commercial Facility)

Docket No. 70-7016-ML

ASLBP No. 10-901-03-ML-BD01

September 13, 2010

INITIAL SCHEDULING ORDER

This proceeding concerns an application by GE-Hitachi Global Laser Enrichment LLC (GLE) for a license to possess and use source, byproduct, and special nuclear material and to enrich natural uranium to a maximum of 8 percent U-235 by a laser-based enrichment process at a proposed enrichment facility to be located in New Hanover County, North Carolina. The Board was established to conduct an uncontested hearing mandated by Section 193(b)(1) of the Atomic Energy Act, 42 U.S.C. § 2243(b)(1), and 10 C.F.R. § 70.23a.<sup>1</sup> As directed by Commission, this Order sets a hearing schedule that contemplates an Initial Decision by the Board “no later than 28½ months (855 days)” from the date of the Notice of Hearing.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Establishment of Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (Apr. 20, 2010); see also 75 Fed. Reg. 21,680 (Apr. 26, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> GE-Hitachi Global Laser Enrichment LLC; (GLE Commercial Facility); Notice of Receipt of Application for License; Notice of Consideration of Issuance of License; Notice of Hearing and Commission Order; and Order Imposing Procedures for Access to Sensitive Unclassified Non-Safeguards Information and Safeguards Information for Contention Preparation, 75 Fed. Reg. 1819, 1823 (Jan. 11, 2010). The schedule established by this Order calls for the Board’s Initial Decision to issue approximately six months before the deadline set by the Commission.

## I. BACKGROUND

On May 27, 2010, pursuant to the Board's Order dated May 11, 2010,<sup>3</sup> the NRC Staff estimated that it will issue the final safety evaluation report (SER) on GLE's application in December 2010, and the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) in February 2011.<sup>4</sup>

On August 19, 2010, pursuant to its Order dated July 12, 2010,<sup>5</sup> the Board held an initial scheduling conference by telephone, in which GLE and the NRC Staff participated.

On August 24, 2010, GLE submitted a proposed hearing schedule for the Board's consideration.<sup>6</sup> On September 2, 2010, the NRC Staff submitted comments, stating that "NRC Staff has no objection to GLE's proposed schedule."<sup>7</sup>

## II. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Staff Documents. The Board will not require periodic status reports, but expects the NRC Staff to promptly advise if its estimates of the issuance dates for the SER or the FEIS should materially change.<sup>8</sup> When these documents are available, the Staff shall provide the Board with four paper copies of each report at or shortly after the time that electronic copies are submitted.<sup>9</sup>

B. Synopsis of Mandatory Determinations. During the prehearing conference call, the parties agreed that Attachment A hereto is an accurate synopsis of five mandatory decisions or

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<sup>3</sup> Licensing Board Order (Concerning Scheduling) (May 11, 2010) at 1 (unpublished).

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Carrie M. Safford, Counsel for NRC Staff, to Licensing Board (May 27, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Licensing Board Order (Scheduling Initial Scheduling Conference) (July 12, 2010) (unpublished).

<sup>6</sup> Applicant's Proposed Hearing Schedule (Aug. 24, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> NRC Staff's Comments on Applicant's Proposed Hearing Schedule (Sept. 2, 2010) at 1 [hereinafter Staff Comments].

<sup>8</sup> See Tr. at 6.

<sup>9</sup> See Tr. at 7.

determinations that the Board must make in this uncontested proceeding.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the Board adopts Attachment A as a synopsis of the five mandatory decisions or determinations that it must make.

C. No Bifurcation. During the prehearing conference call, the parties agreed that, based on the NRC Staff's estimates of the dates for issuing the SER and FEIS, it would not be efficient to bifurcate hearings on safety and environmental issues.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the Board intends to conduct a single hearing on all issues.

D. Classified and Other Protected Information. On September 10, 2010, in response to the Board's request,<sup>12</sup> the Commission designated Douglas Hase, of the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response, Division of Security Operations, to advise and assist the Board with respect to protecting and handling classified, safeguards, or other security-related information in this uncontested proceeding.<sup>13</sup> After conferring with Mr. Hase, the Board will address how and when such issues might most usefully be addressed.

E. Site Visit. GLE has expressed its belief that a visit to the site of the proposed facility would be useful to the Board, and the NRC Staff has no objection.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, the Board presently intends to conduct a site visit at a time to be determined (most likely during February 2011).

F. Limited Appearances. The Notice of Hearing requested persons desiring to make a limited appearance, pursuant to 10 C.F.R. § 2.315(a), to inform the Secretary of the

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<sup>10</sup> Tr. at 14-15.

<sup>11</sup> Tr. at 7-8.

<sup>12</sup> Licensing Board Request to Commission (Seeking Designation of Representative to Advise and Assist Licensing Board with Respect to Classification of Information and Safeguards to Be Observed) (Aug. 25, 2010) (unpublished).

<sup>13</sup> Commission Order (Sept. 10, 2010) (unpublished).

<sup>14</sup> Tr. at 21-23.

Commission by March 15, 2010.<sup>15</sup> If limited appearance requests are submitted at a later time, the Board will determine whether to grant them, after allowing the parties an opportunity to comment.

G. Board Written Questions. GLE's proposed schedule contemplates two sets of written questions from the Board to the parties: the first concerning the SER, and the second concerning the FEIS.<sup>16</sup> The Board will endeavor to ask all of its safety-related questions in the first set. It is possible, however, that the Board might ask some additional safety-related questions in the second set, which will primarily address the FEIS. The parties' written answers shall, for each question, identify the responding subject matter expert(s) or individual(s), and shall be submitted in exhibit form, under oath, so that they are suitable for receipt into evidence without the necessity of the personal appearance of each expert or individual. The parties are reminded that the need for written or oral testimony during the evidentiary hearing may be reduced if the parties' answers to the Board's written questions resolve the Board's concerns and establish an adequate record.

H. Prefiled Testimony. As contemplated by GLE's proposed schedule,<sup>17</sup> before the evidentiary hearing the Board will specify the topics to be covered and the written testimony and exhibits to be filed. The prefiled written testimony shall identify the responding subject matter expert(s) or individuals(s), and shall be submitted in exhibit form, under oath, so that it is suitable for receipt into evidence without the necessity of the personal appearance of the witness. After reviewing the prefiled testimony and exhibits, the Board may advise a party that oral testimony from a particular expert or individual is not needed and that witness need not appear. Unless so advised, however, each party shall ensure that each person for whom it submits written testimony personally attends the evidentiary hearing and is available to testify

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<sup>15</sup> 75 Fed. Reg. at 1821-22.

<sup>16</sup> See Applicant's Proposed Hearing Schedule at 3.

<sup>17</sup> See id.

and respond to questions. Additionally, as appropriate, the Board encourages the parties to supplement formal prefiled written testimony with PowerPoint-type summaries at the oral hearing. Such summaries should be submitted as far in advance of the hearing as practicable, and preferably at the same time as prefiled testimony.

I. Hearing Date and Location. The Board will confirm the date and specify the location of the evidentiary hearing in a subsequent order. Consistent with the views expressed by the parties,<sup>18</sup> the Board prefers to conduct the hearing in North Carolina, if possible, but may conduct some or all of the hearing at NRC headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, if necessary to protect Restricted Data or National Security Information.

### III. SCHEDULE

With one small but important modification, the Board adopts the schedule proposed by the applicant GLE and accepted by the NRC Staff.<sup>19</sup> GLE's proposal would allow a mere 10 days between submission of prefiled testimony and the start of the evidentiary hearing. This is too short a time for the Board members to study the prefiled testimony and confer on how to proceed most efficiently. Among other things, it may result in the unnecessary attendance at the hearing of witnesses whose physical presence might not be required if the Board has an adequate opportunity to consider their written testimony. In contrast, the Commission's milestones for a contested proceeding allow 20 days between prefiled testimony and the start of the hearing,<sup>20</sup> which the Board believes more appropriate. Accordingly, the Board has adjusted GLE's proposed schedule to allow 20 days between prefiled testimony and the hearing. Otherwise, the scheduled dates are essentially as proposed by GLE, with the result that the target for the Board's Initial Decision is extended by approximately 10 days.

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<sup>18</sup> See Tr. at 17-19.

<sup>19</sup> See Applicant's Proposed Hearing Schedule at 2-4; Staff Comments at 1.

<sup>20</sup> 75 Fed Reg. at 1824.

Meeting the schedule set forth below of course depends upon the NRC Staff's issuance of the SER and FEIS when estimated and upon many other factors, including but not limited to the quality of the parties' responses to the Board's questions and whether complications arise from the potential need for the Board to address classified materials. Conversely, if, as GLE suggests, it might not be necessary for the parties to submit proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law in this uncontested proceeding<sup>21</sup> (or for the parties necessarily to take the full 45 days that GLE allocates to their preparation<sup>22</sup>), then the Board may be able to issue its Initial Decision before the target date.

Subject to these qualifications and the Board's further orders, the schedule for this proceeding shall be as follows:

December 31, 2010	SER issued.
February 28, 2011	FEIS issued.
February 28, 2011	Board issues first set of questions (on SER).
March 31, 2011	Board issues second set of questions (primarily on FEIS).
April 29, 2011	Parties submit responses to Board questions.
May 31, 2011	Board identifies areas for prefiled testimony.
July 11, 2011	Parties submit prefiled testimony.
August 1, 2011	Mandatory hearing commences.
August 3, 2011	Mandatory hearing concluded.
September 19, 2011	Proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.
October 31, 2011	Board Initial Decision.

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<sup>21</sup> Applicant's Proposed Hearing Schedule at 4 n.2. The NRC Staff, however, favors providing the parties an opportunity to file proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law at the conclusion of the mandatory hearing. Staff Comments at 1.

<sup>22</sup> Applicant's Proposed Hearing Schedule at 4.

It is so ORDERED.

FOR THE ATOMIC SAFETY  
AND LICENSING BOARD

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Paul S. Ryerson, Chairman  
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

Rockville, Maryland  
September 13, 2010

## ATTACHMENT A

### MANDATORY DETERMINATIONS THAT MUST BE MADE IN THE UNCONTESTED PROCEEDING ON GE-HITACHI APPLICATION FOR URANIUM ENRICHMENT LICENSE

GE-Hitachi Global Laser Enrichment LLC (GLE Commercial Facility) has applied to the NRC for a license to possess and use source, byproduct, and special nuclear material and to enrich natural uranium to a maximum of 8 percent U-235 by a laser-based enrichment process at a proposed facility to be located in New Hanover County, North Carolina. 75 Fed. Reg. 1819 (Jan. 13, 2010). In its notice of hearing, the Commission specified that, if the application was not contested, then the Licensing Board must nevertheless hold a Subpart G hearing and must make several mandatory determinations. *Id.* at 1820-21. These mandatory determinations are as follows:

1. General Issue 1: “[T]he Licensing Board will determine the following without conducting a de novo evaluation of the application: (1) Whether the application and record of the proceeding contain sufficient information to support license issuance and whether the NRC staff’s review of the application has been adequate to support findings to be made by the Director of the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards with respect to the matters set forth in paragraph C of this section.”<sup>1</sup> Notice of Hearing II.D(1).
2. General Issue 2: “[T]he Licensing Board will determine the following without conducting a de novo evaluation of the application . . . (2) whether the review conducted by the NRC staff pursuant to 10 CFR part 51 has been adequate.” Notice of Hearing II.D(2).
3. NEPA Baseline Issue 1: “[T]he Licensing Board will, in the initial decision, in accordance with Subpart A of 10 CFR part 51: Determine whether the requirements of sections 102(2)(A), (C) and (E) of NEPA and subpart A of 10 CFR part 51 have been complied with in the proceeding.” Notice of Hearing II.E.
4. NEPA Baseline Issue 2: “[T]he Licensing Board will, in the initial decision, in accordance with Subpart A of 10 CFR part 51: . . . independently consider the final balance among conflicting factors contained in the record of the proceeding with a view to determining the appropriate action to be taken.” Notice of Hearing II.E.
5. NEPA Baseline Issue 3: “[T]he Licensing Board will, in the initial decision, in accordance with Subpart A of 10 CFR part 51: . . . determine, after weighing the environmental, economic, technical, and other benefits against the environmental and other costs, and considering reasonable alternatives, whether a license should be issued, denied, or appropriately conditioned to protect environmental values.” Notice of Hearing II.E.

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<sup>1</sup> Subpart C states: “The matters of fact and law to be considered are whether the application satisfies the standards set forth in this Notice and Commission Order and the applicable standards in 10 CFR parts 30, 40, and 70, and whether the requirements of NEPA and the NRC’s implementing regulations in 10 CFR part 51 have been met.” 75 Fed. Reg. at 1821.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of )  
)  
GE-HITACHI GLOBAL LASER ) Docket No. 70-7016-ML  
ENRICHMENT FACILITY LLC )  
(GLE Commercial Facility) )

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing INITIAL SCHEDULING ORDER have been served upon the following persons by Electronic Information Exchange.

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GE-HITACHI GLOBAL LASER ENRICHMENT FACILITY LLC  
DOCKET NO. 70-7016-ML  
INITIAL SCHEDULING ORDER

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[Original signed by Evangeline S. Ngbea]  
Office of the Secretary of the Commission

Dated at Rockville, Maryland  
this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September 2010