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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS PRELIMINARY SITE-SPECIFIC  
RESULTS OF THE LICENSE RENEWAL ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR  
PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY,

SEPTEMBER 15, 2010

+ + + + +

AVONDALE, ARIZONA

+ + + + +

The Public Meeting convened in Estrella  
Mountain Community College at 3000 North Dysart Road,  
Avondale, Arizona 85392 at 7:00 p.m.

Present on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission:

JAY ROBINSON

DAVID DRUCKER

KEVIN FOLK

LARA USELDING

MIKE BAQUERA

JOE BASHORE

GINA McFADDEN

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Adjourn . . . . . 20

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 7:00 p.m.

3 JAY ROBINSON: If I could have everyone take  
4 a seat, please, and we'll get started.

5 I want to first of all thank everybody for  
6 coming out tonight. This is a public meeting of the  
7 Nuclear Regulatory Commission where we will be  
8 soliciting comments on the Palo Verde Draft  
9 Environmental Impact Statement, which was completed as  
10 part of their license renewal process. My name is Jay  
11 Robinson. I'm a branch chief from the Nuclear  
12 Regulatory Commission and I work in Rockville,  
13 Maryland.

14 First of all, let's just go over a couple of  
15 ground rules. Everybody knows where the exit is, right  
16 there in case there is an emergency. This door over  
17 here has the restrooms and a water fountain. If you  
18 need the facilities, they're over there. If you do  
19 have a cell phone or a pager, just put it on vibrate.  
20 If you do have to take a call, please exit the room and  
21 take the call outside. If you have to have a sidebar  
22 conversation, I'll just ask that you do that outside as  
23 well so you don't disturb the meeting.

24 We are transcribing the meeting today, so if  
25 you are going to make a public comment, please announce

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1 yourself, your name, and your affiliation and speak  
2 slowly and clearly into the microphone. The transcript  
3 should be available I guess a couple of weeks after  
4 today we'll have that -- do we post that publicly, the  
5 transcript?

6 DAVID DRUCKER: Yes.

7 JAY ROBINSON: Yes. So that will be posted  
8 on the public website.

9 First of all, we're going to start off with a  
10 very brief presentation of the license renewal process.  
11 We'll talk a little bit about the environmental review  
12 for Palo Verde and then most of the time is going to be  
13 devoted to the public comments.

14 Right now we have, I think, three people  
15 signed up to speak; is that right?

16 KEVIN FOLK: Yes.

17 JAY ROBINSON: So if you do want to make a  
18 public comment, you can see Kevin in the back there and  
19 sign up to speak. But at this time we only have three  
20 people.

21 There are some additional staff members from  
22 Headquarters, we have Mr. David Drucker; he's the  
23 project manager, the environmental project manager for  
24 Palo Verde license renewal. We have Kevin Folk sitting  
25 at the back table; he's with the Environmental Review

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1 Branch at Headquarters. Lara Uselding, she's from  
2 regional staff. And also the -- who work at the  
3 Resident Inspectors office we have Joe Bashore, Michael  
4 Baquera, and Gina McFadden. So welcome all of those  
5 NRC staff people.

6 I don't think I have anything else. Does  
7 anybody have any questions before we begin? Then I'll  
8 hand it over to David and we'll start the meeting.  
9 Thank you.

10 DAVID DRUCKER: Thank you, Jay.

11 The NRC was established to regulate civilian  
12 uses of nuclear materials including applications that  
13 produce electric power. The NRC conducts license  
14 renewal reviews for plants whose owners wish to operate  
15 them beyond their initial license period.

16 NRC license renewal reviews address safety  
17 issues related to managing the effects of aging and  
18 environmental issues related to an additional 20 years  
19 of operation. In all aspects of the NRC's regulation,  
20 our mission is threefold: protect public health and  
21 safety, promote common defense and security, and  
22 protect the environment.

23 In this meeting I will discuss the potential  
24 site-specific impacts of license renewal for Palo Verde  
25 Nuclear Generating Station. The site-specific findings

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1 are contained in the Draft Supplemental Environmental  
2 Impact Statement the NRC staff published on August 12<sup>th</sup>,  
3 2010. This document contains analyses of all  
4 applicable site-specific issues, as well as a review of  
5 issues common to many or all nuclear power plants.  
6 Issues for which the environmental impacts are the same  
7 across some or all nuclear power plants are discussed  
8 in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

9 NRC staff reviewed these issues to determine  
10 whether the conclusions in the Generic Environmental  
11 Impact Statement are valid for Palo Verde. The NRC  
12 staff also reviewed the environmental impacts of  
13 potential alternatives to license renewal. We  
14 considered ways to replace Palo Verde's electric  
15 generation capacity to determine whether the impacts  
16 expected from license renewal are unreasonable in  
17 comparison to other power generation options.

18 An earlier part of this environmental review  
19 was the scoping period. During this period, the NRC  
20 solicited comments concerning what to focus our review  
21 on. Comments received during the scoping period and  
22 responses to those comments are addressed in Appendix A  
23 of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact  
24 Statement. Comments were grouped into categories shown  
25 in the second bullet on the slide. Many of the

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1 comments voiced support for continued operation of Palo  
2 Verde.

3           This slide lists the environmental issues NRC  
4 staff reviewed for Palo Verde. The staff's preliminary  
5 conclusion is that all site-specific impacts related to  
6 license renewal are small.

7           Air quality in the vicinity of Palo Verde is  
8 regulated by the Maricopa County Air Quality  
9 Department, and they recently reissued the Palo Verde  
10 air permit in August 2010.

11           Groundwater at Palo Verde is regulated by the  
12 Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the  
13 Arizona Department of Water Resources. And Palo Verde  
14 pumps groundwater at rates well below what it is  
15 authorized.

16           Concerning surface water, Palo Verde does not  
17 draw water directly from any natural surface water  
18 body; instead it uses treated wastewater effluent from  
19 the Phoenix area. Palo Verde does not release water to  
20 any natural surface water body. Instead, cooling water  
21 is discharged to man-made, lined, evaporation ponds  
22 with no outlet and no hydraulic connection to any  
23 natural surface water body.

24           Concerning aquatic and terrestrial source  
25 resources, NRC staff contacted the U.S. Fish and

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1 Wildlife Service and the Arizona Game and Fish  
2 Department and determined that the impact to these  
3 resources would be small.

4 The review of human health included noise,  
5 radiation exposure, and electromagnetic fields.

6 Socioeconomics addressed housing impacts,  
7 public services, off-site land use, transportation,  
8 historic and archaeological resources, and  
9 environmental justice.

10 The detailed analysis of each of these issues  
11 is presented in chapter four of the Draft Supplemental  
12 Environmental Impact Statement, and waste management is  
13 addressed in chapter six.

14 When reviewing the potential cumulative  
15 impacts of license renewal on the environment, NRC  
16 staff also looked at the effects on the environment  
17 from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable  
18 future human actions. The NRC staff preliminarily  
19 concluded that the cumulative impacts associated with  
20 these issues shown above would be small, and this  
21 analysis is addressed in Section 4.11 of the Draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement.

23 A major step in determining whether license  
24 renewal is reasonable or not is comparing its likely  
25 impacts with alternatives, including other methods of

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1 power generation and not renewing the Palo Verde  
2 operating licenses.

3 In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement,  
4 NRC staff considered coal-fired generation, natural gas  
5 generation, new nuclear generation, and as part of a  
6 combination alternative, conservation and efficiency  
7 combined with natural gas generation and with solar  
8 power.

9 The NRC staff initially considered a number  
10 of additional alternatives for analysis as alternatives  
11 to license renewal. These were later dismissed due to  
12 technical, resource ability, or commercial limitations  
13 that currently exist and that are likely to continue to  
14 exist when the existing Palo Verde licenses expire.

15 Finally, the NRC staff considered what would  
16 happen if no action is taken and Palo Verde shuts down  
17 at the end of its current licenses without a  
18 replacement alternative. And overall the staff found  
19 the impacts from energy alternatives would vary widely  
20 based on the characteristics of those alternatives. In  
21 most cases, construction of new facilities created  
22 significant impacts. Overall, NRC staff concludes that  
23 continued operation of Palo Verde is the  
24 environmentally preferred alternative.

25 So based on a review of the likely

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1 environmental impacts from license renewal as well as  
2 potential environmental impacts of alternatives to  
3 license renewal, the NRC staff's preliminary  
4 recommendation is the environmental impacts of license  
5 renewal for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station are  
6 not so great that license renewal would be  
7 unreasonable.

8 Well, the environmental review is not yet  
9 completed; your comments today and all written comments  
10 received by the end of the comment period on October  
11 29<sup>th</sup> will be considered by NRC staff as we develop the  
12 final supplemental environmental impact statement,  
13 which we currently plan to issue this winter. It will  
14 contain the staff's final recommendation on the  
15 acceptability of license renewal based on the work  
16 we've already performed and on the input we receive  
17 during the comment period. Your comments can help to  
18 change the staff's findings in the final environmental  
19 impact statement.

20 I am the primary contact for environmental  
21 review and Lisa Regner is the primary contact for the  
22 safety review. Hard copies of the Draft Environmental  
23 Impact Statement are available at the back table where  
24 Kevin is sitting, as are copies on CD, on compact disk.  
25 In addition, Litchfield Park Branch Library and Sam

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1 Garcia Western Avenue Library have copies available.  
2 You can also find electronic copies of the Draft  
3 Environmental Impact Statement along with other  
4 information about the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating  
5 Station license renewal review online at the third  
6 bullet shown on the slide.

7           And if you need this information just, you  
8 know, later on after the briefing, please come up and  
9 I'll tell you where you can find it. It's actually  
10 inside the very first couple of pages of the Draft  
11 Environmental Impact Statement.

12           So to submit written comments, you can send  
13 them to the NRC via email at the address at the first  
14 bullet or via conventional mail and if you have any  
15 written comments today you can provide them to any NRC  
16 staff member.

17           And that concludes my remarks. And I will  
18 now turn the meeting back over to Jay. And I just want  
19 to say thank you all very, very much, especially for  
20 those who have listened to this for two times today.

21           JAY ROBINSON: Thank you, David.

22           Now we'll open the meeting up to public  
23 comments. First is Dr. Clay Goodman.

24           CLAY GOODMAN: Good evening all, and I'm  
25 going to wear some multiple hats this evening.

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1           My name is Clay Goodman, I'm the Vice  
2 President for Occupational Education here at Estrella  
3 Mountain Community College, and we're very happy to  
4 host this meeting this evening. So that's the first  
5 hat, as your host. Welcome. I hope you've enjoyed the  
6 campus. I've heard some comments that people like what  
7 they see. We like providing service to the community.

8           The second hat, similar to the first, is our  
9 long-term relationship with Palo Verde. It goes back  
10 many, many years with both Arizona Public Service as  
11 the parent company and Palo Verde Nuclear Generating  
12 Station.

13           Estrella Mountain is part of the Maricopa  
14 County Community College District; those of you that  
15 live here may know that. Maricopa is the largest  
16 community college district in the country. We have  
17 about 270,000 students enrolled this semester.  
18 Estrella Mountain is one of ten colleges, we have about  
19 8,000 students enrolled, and many of those are Palo  
20 Verde employees.

21           Specifically, programs that we provide have  
22 to do with the operation of the plant. We have a long  
23 relationship in working with the maintenance folks, the  
24 tradesmen who keep the plant put together. Our  
25 maintenance internship program has produced about 150

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1 program completers since its inception, many of whom  
2 are working at Palo Verde right now either as  
3 apprentices or after they've moved through that program  
4 are working as journeymen, tradesmen. Areas: HVAC,  
5 machining, instrumentation and control, and several  
6 other trades. It's been a very long and fruitful  
7 partnership, and one that Palo Verde's been  
8 instrumental in helping us put together. We meet  
9 regularly with Palo Verde staff to review curriculum,  
10 to review standards and make sure that those are  
11 delivered to the students who would then hopefully  
12 become employees.

13           The second educational relationship that we  
14 have is relatively new. It's working with Palo Verde  
15 on a uniform curriculum through Nuclear Energy  
16 Institute. I just know it as NEI, so I hope I got  
17 Nuclear Energy Institute right. But they're developing  
18 a uniform curriculum that will help train future  
19 workers to work in nuclear plants.

20           We just finished a curriculum analysis on  
21 radiation protection technology that is moving through  
22 the approval process. Radiation protection is a new  
23 program for us in just the last couple of years and we  
24 have about 40 students enrolled. We're very excited  
25 about that.

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1           Palo Verde has, again, been instrumental in  
2 providing faculty for us. The expertise that we need  
3 in the classroom to help train that future workforce is  
4 very important to keeping the plant safe and then can  
5 have some relevance to the environmental impact. We're  
6 growing that program, and when the curriculum is vetted  
7 through the NEI and becomes uniform, we hope to join a  
8 consortium with California nuclear utilities, the  
9 colleges that are associated with those will work with  
10 Estrella Mountain in helping provide that particular  
11 workforce.

12           Radiation protection is the first, and we're  
13 looking at chemistry and operations as well, to expand  
14 into. And we couldn't do it without a partner like  
15 Palo Verde. Palo Verde couldn't do it without a  
16 partner like Estrella Mountain. So it's been a very  
17 positive relationship and one we're very happy to have  
18 and would like to see it continue.

19           The third hat, the last hat I'm going to  
20 wear, is as a resident of the West Valley. I live and  
21 work out here, raise my family out here, have  
22 absolutely no concerns that there's a nuclear power  
23 plant located very close. As a matter of fact, when I  
24 was going to college I was an iron worker and some of  
25 my rebar is buried under concrete out there. But I

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1 think it just speaks to Palo Verde's commitment to the  
2 community, keeping the community informed, keeping the  
3 community safe and it's somebody that we would like to  
4 keep out here. Thank you very much.

5 JAY ROBINSON: Thank you for those comments.  
6 Next, we have Anna Kupcik.

7 ANNA KUPCIK: Thank you. I'm glad to be here  
8 tonight. I'm Anna Kupcik with the Buckeye Valley  
9 Chamber of Commerce and I just want -- I'm going to  
10 read this so I don't miss anything.

11 The Buckeye Valley Chamber of Commerce and  
12 the business community in Buckeye strongly support the  
13 continued operation of the Palo Verde nuclear  
14 generating station as an asset to this area.

15 Palo Verde employs over 2000 people full-  
16 time, with periodic additions of temporary workers,  
17 providing major economic benefits to our community. We  
18 have confidence in the ability of APS to operate the  
19 plant efficiently, safely, and to the benefit of our  
20 entire area. Palo Verde provides 35 percent of the  
21 power in Arizona and supplies parts of California with  
22 clean, efficient energy. We appreciate the outreach  
23 efforts of the NRC and APS, keeping us updated on  
24 issues at Palo Verde and we appreciate this opportunity  
25 to express our views.

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1           And I too am a resident of the West Valley  
2 and have been around since the building of Palo Verde  
3 and seen the economic impacts it's had on the whole  
4 west side for about 30 years. So we really appreciate  
5 having that in our own backyard.

6           JAY ROBINSON: Thank you. Next, we have Jeff  
7 Muecke.

8           JEFF MUECKE: Correct.

9           JAY ROBINSON: Did I pronounce your name  
10 right?

11          JEFF MUECKE: You did.

12          JAY ROBINSON: Okay, good.

13          JEFF MUECKE: Very good. So thank you.

14          JAY ROBINSON: I had a lot of help with that.

15          JEFF MUECKE: That's very good.

16                 Good evening. I'm really here for two fold,  
17 one is living here in residence in the Valley of the  
18 Sun since 1968. You know, as growing up and going to  
19 Phoenix College and ASU I can tell you that you always  
20 wonder where power comes from and where electricity is  
21 and what resources you have. And I've got to tell you,  
22 I've never worried, really, about the Palo Verde plant  
23 being here.

24                 I'm a resident here at Litchfield Park and I  
25 can tell you it's had a significant impact on the

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1 growth here of the Valley. And I know a lot of people  
2 that do work out at the plant, a lot of people that  
3 benefit from having the plant here in the Valley, and I  
4 would like to see it continue to be able to prosper.

5           From a business standpoint I have been very  
6 fortunate to work on the education side of the private  
7 sector, which is Universal Technical Institute and we  
8 provide technicians all across the United States.  
9 We're publicly held. I'm the vice president and have  
10 been with the company for 28 years. And I can tell you  
11 that a lot of students benefit from the plant being  
12 here, but I also can tell you that the significant  
13 impact is energy, resource, the heavy equipment. There  
14 are a lot of jobs to come by this new technology.  
15 Nuclear energy's not new, but obviously it's rapidly  
16 growing. There's 104 nuclear power plants across the  
17 United States and I've just got to believe it's a great  
18 resource for this country.

19           We employ here in the Valley 600 employees.  
20 So of the 600 employees that work here in the Valley,  
21 I've got to tell you energy's very important. And so  
22 we have a 28,000 square foot plant here in Avondale  
23 that has right close to 3,000 students. We have  
24 another campus up in Deer Valley, which is up in north  
25 Phoenix, that has right close to another 2,000

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1 students, and about 200 employees, and then our home  
2 office is here.

3           You look for efficiencies; and efficiencies  
4 is what drives cost if you're a publicly held company  
5 like us and you want to make sure that energy costs are  
6 affordable. And I've got to tell you, out of all 11  
7 campuses of ours across the United States, I've got to  
8 tell you from an efficiency standpoint the Avondale  
9 campus and the MMI campus are one of our most  
10 profitable. And that's due to the energy costs that I  
11 think we're fortunate to have here. I attribute that a  
12 lot to the Palo Verde plant.

13           So thank you very much.

14           JAY ROBINSON: Thank you. We do have an  
15 additional person who would like to comment. Sharon  
16 Hohman; is that correct?

17           SHARON HOHMAN: Yes, it is.

18           JAY ROBINSON: Good. And I had help with  
19 that one, too.

20           SHARON HOHMAN: Thank you.

21           Thank you very much. I have not read or seen  
22 anything that would take away from the comments I made  
23 the last time we had the visit. I don't think I would  
24 change anything except to reiterate.

25           I too have been in the Valley as a

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1 businessperson since 1980. Currently, I am the  
2 Executive Director of the Southwest Valley Chamber of  
3 Commerce, so I work with a lot of businesspeople. My  
4 job is to encourage people to come to the area. My job  
5 is to make people feel comfortable in the area. And I  
6 believe that Palo Verde provides the energy we need.  
7 We can't encourage more people if we do not have the  
8 energy, and it's absolutely critical to our growth.

9           And I would like to emphasize that one more  
10 time, I have never felt unsafe living here or working  
11 here. I watched it build. I've watched it operate. I  
12 think that Arizona Public Service does an incredible  
13 job, excellent job, of operation. And I just want to  
14 reiterate those comments and thank you for the  
15 opportunity to be here and stress how important the  
16 relicensing is. Thank you.

17           JAY ROBINSON: Thank you.

18           Is there anyone else who'd like to make a  
19 public comment at this time? So what we'll do is, like  
20 we did this afternoon, we'll just -- since this meeting  
21 is for public comments, we'll keep the meeting open for  
22 a while. If you don't want to stay, there's no reason  
23 for you to stay, but we will not -- we're not closing  
24 the meeting right now. We'll keep it open for a while,  
25 see if anybody else comes, and then we'll discuss when

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1 we'll close it based on if we get any more people  
2 wanting to make public comments. All right, thank you.

3 (A brief recess was taken.)

4 JAY ROBINSON: If I could ask everybody to  
5 have a seat, we'll wrap up the meeting. Wow, that was  
6 quick.

7 Once again I'd like to thank everybody for  
8 coming to the public meeting to take comments on the  
9 Palo Verde Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Bear  
10 with me for a minute; I have to read the email address  
11 and the address for comments into the record.

12 So if you do want to submit comments, you  
13 could submit them by email to:

14 PaloVerdeEIS@nrc.gov

15 Or you could submit them via regular mail to  
16 the Chief Rulemaking and Directives Branch, Division of  
17 Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail  
18 Stop: TWB-5B01M U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission,  
19 Washington, DC, 20555-0001.

20 Are there any other public comments at this  
21 time? Okay, one more announcement, we do have public  
22 feedback forms, so if you want to submit a comment on  
23 the meeting please take one of these forms. It should  
24 be double-sided, so all you've got to do is make your  
25 comment, fold it up and drop it in the mailbox, and it

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1 will get back to us at headquarters. And if there are  
2 not any other comments or questions, this will conclude  
3 the meeting and thank you for coming.

4 (The meeting adjourned.)

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