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Atomic Safety and Licensing Board to Take Public Comment, Hold Hearing Oct. 30 on Proposed New Reactor in Michigan

An Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) will hold a hearing Oct. 30 in Monroe, Mich., concerning a challenge by several environmental groups to the Combined License application for a new nuclear reactor at the Fermi site in Monroe County, Mich. The ASLB is the independent body within the NRC that conducts adjudicatory hearings and renders decisions on legal challenges to licensing actions.

The hearing, which begins at 9:30 a.m. EDT, will be held in the Monroe County Courthouse's Board Meeting Room, 125 E. Second St. in Monroe. If necessary, the Board will continue the hearing through Friday, Nov. 1. Members of the public and media are welcome to observe the evidentiary hearing, but participation in the hearing will be limited to the parties and their lawyers and witnesses. Those planning to attend the evidentiary hearing should arrive at least 15 minutes early to allow time for security screening, including searches of hand-carried items such as briefcases or backpacks. No signs will be permitted in the courtroom.

The Board will also take comments from interested members of the public, known as limited appearance statements, on Tuesday, Oct. 29, from 1 – 3 p.m. and from 7 – 8:30 p.m. in the Meyer Theater at the Monroe County Community College's La-Z-Boy Center, 1555 S. Raisinville Road in Monroe. These statements are not testimony or evidence, but they nonetheless may aid the Board and/or the parties in considering the issues in the hearing. Speakers will be allotted approximately 5 minutes each for their statements, and the Board reserves the right to end the comment sessions early if all those present have had the opportunity to speak.

Those interested in speaking may request time prior to or during the limited appearance sessions. Requests submitted prior to the limited appearance sessions will be given priority. Members of the public may submit written requests to make an oral statement until 5 p.m. EDT on Friday, October 18, via mail to:

Administrative Judge Ronald M. Spritzer
Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
Mail Stop T-3F23
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

via fax to (301) 415-5599, or via email to onika.williams@nrc.gov and ronald.spritzer@nrc.gov. Those who cannot attend the sessions in Monroe can submit written statements using the methods above, sending copies via mail to:

Office of the Secretary
Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20444-0001

via fax to (301) 415-1101 or via e-mail to hearingdocket@nrc.gov.

This hearing involves Detroit Edison's application to build an Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor at the Fermi site. Several environmental groups, including Beyond Nuclear, Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination, Citizens Environmental, Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, Don't Waste Michigan and the Sierra Club, filed a legal challenge opposing the application. The groups argue that the environmental review of the proposed reactor fails to adequately analyze and discuss impacts on the eastern fox snake at the site. The groups also argue that quality assurance concerns regarding safety analysis work by Detroit Edison and its contractor prevent the NRC from issuing a license for the proposed reactor. The hearing will examine these two arguments.

Documents related to the [Fermi application](#) are available on the NRC website. Documents regarding this ASLB proceeding are available on the NRC's [Electronic Hearing Docket](#) by clicking on the folder entitled "Fermi_52-033-COL" on the left side of the page. More information about [the role of the ASLB](#) in the licensing process is available on the NRC website.