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NRC Seeks Public Comment on Its Environmental Study of Proposed Medical Radioisotope Production Facility in Columbia, Mo.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on its draft environmental impact study of a medical radioisotope production facility proposed for Columbia, Mo. The study recommends a construction permit be issued to Northwest Medical Isotopes LLC, barring any safety issues identified in the agency's ongoing technical review of the application.

NRC staff will hold a public meeting Dec. 6 from 6-8 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Columbia-East, 915 Port Way, in Columbia, to present the draft study's findings and receive public comment. Agency staff members will be on hand one hour before the meeting for informal discussions with members of the public.

Northwest submitted the application in February 2015, proposing to construct a facility to produce molybdenum-99 from low-enriched uranium. Molybdenum-99 decays to technetium-99m, the most commonly used radioisotope in medicine. Technetium-99m is used in 20 million to 25 million diagnostic procedures around the world each year, such as bone and organ scans to detect cancer, and cardiovascular imaging. There are currently no molybdenum-99 production facilities in the United States, though the NRC has issued a construction authorization to SHINE Medical Technologies to build one in Janesville, Wis.

The draft environmental impact statement ([NUREG-2209](#)) documents the NRC staff's environmental review of Northwest's construction authorization application. It examines the environmental impacts of construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed facility, as well as the transportation and irradiation of uranium targets at research reactors. It concludes the environmental impacts would be small and therefore not be significant enough to deny the construction permit.

Comments on the draft environmental impact statement may be submitted in person at the Dec. 6 public meeting or in writing online at www.regulations.gov, using Docket ID NRC-2013-0235. Comments will be accepted through Dec. 29. More information on the public meeting and how to submit comments was published in the [Federal Register](#) on Nov. 9.