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NRC Issues Final Environmental Impact Statement on Proposed Medical Radioisotope Production Missouri Facility

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has published its final environmental impact statement on a [medical radioisotope production facility](#) proposed for Columbia, Mo. The study recommends that a construction permit be issued to Northwest Medical Isotopes, LLC, barring the identification of any safety issues during the agency's ongoing safety review.

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 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 permit to SHINE Medical Technologies to build one in Janesville, Wis.

The environmental impact statement ([NUREG-2209](#)) documents the NRC staff's environmental review of Northwest's construction permit application. The review examined the environmental impacts of constructing, operating and decommissioning the proposed facility, as well as the transportation of uranium targets to research reactors and their irradiation in those reactors. It concludes that the environmental impacts would be small, with cumulative impacts on air quality and noise being small to moderate, and cumulative impacts on ecological resources being moderate. None of the projected impacts would be significant enough to deny the construction permit.

The NRC published a draft environmental impact statement for public comment in November 2016. Comments received were addressed in the final version.