



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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LICENSING BOARD TO HEAR PUBLIC COMMENTS APRIL 27-28 IN VOGTLE EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION PROCEEDING

The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB), an independent judicial arm of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, will hold sessions on Sunday, April 27, and Monday, April 28, at which members of the public can make brief statements concerning an Early Site Permit (ESP) application for the Vogtle site near Waynesboro, Ga.

The Sunday session will be from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. EDT, and the Monday session will be from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. EDT. The ASLB will hold the sessions, known as "oral limited appearance statement sessions," at the DoubleTree Hotel and Convention Center, 2651 Perimeter Parkway, Augusta, Ga.

Each speaker will receive approximately five minutes to make a statement to the Board, but presentations may be further limited depending on how many people wish to make a statement. Individuals may request an opportunity to speak at more than one session, but the Board may defer an individual's additional presentation until all speakers have had an opportunity to make an initial presentation.

Southern Nuclear Operating Company submitted the Vogtle ESP application on Aug. 14, 2006. If approved, the permit would give Southern Nuclear up to 20 years to decide whether to build one or more nuclear plants on the site and to file an application with the NRC to begin construction. The NRC staff continues to review Southern Nuclear's ESP application, and expects to issue a final Environmental Impact Statement in August 2008, as well as a final Safety Evaluation Report, although its issuance date has yet to be determined. The staff's conclusions, however, will not be binding on the Board as it makes an independent judgment on the ESP application.

The ASLB invites members of the public to comment on issues in this case that have been raised by several groups challenging the application. The groups' questions focus on how the potential facility's cooling system could affect aquatic resources, and whether Southern Nuclear should implement a "dry" cooling system as a design alternative. In addition, the Board invites comments that may be relevant later, when it conducts a so-called "mandatory" hearing. The hearing will determine whether the NRC staff adequately reviewed safety and environmental

aspects of the application not related to the groups' challenges, and made findings relative to that review with reasonable support in logic and fact. The limited appearance statements regarding these matters are not testimony or evidence, but they may help the Licensing Board and/or the parties in their consideration of the issues in the proceeding.

Members of the public are encouraged to pre-register to speak, and those who do so will receive priority to speak at the meetings. Written pre-registration requests must be mailed, faxed, or sent by e-mail and arrive at the ASLB by 5:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, April 18. The request must specify the session (Sunday or Monday) when the requester wishes to make an oral statement. The Board reserves the right to cancel either session if pre-registrations received by April 18 indicate insufficient interest. The Board may also end a session ahead of the scheduled ending time if all speakers present have made a presentation.

Anyone wishing to submit a written request to make an oral statement may do so by e-mail to map4@nrc.gov and gpb@nrc.gov, by fax to (301) 415-5599, or by mail to: Administrative Judge G. Paul Bollwerk, III, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, Mail Stop: T-3F23, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Anyone wishing to submit a written statement may do so by e-mail to hearingdocket@nrc.gov, by fax to (301) 415-1101, or by mail to Office of the Secretary, Attn: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff, Mail Stop: O-16C1, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, with a copy to Judge Bollwerk.

Documents related to the proceeding are available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., and on the NRC Web site at www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/esp/vogtle.html. Documents also are available for inspection at the Burke County Library in Waynesboro.

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