



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406
E-mail: opal@nrc.gov
Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. I-08-033

May 14, 2008

Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

NRC SEEKS INPUT ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION; MEETINGS ON MAY 28

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is seeking public comments on its preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude renewal of the operating license for the Susquehanna nuclear power plant, in Salem Township (Luzerne County), Pa. On Wednesday, May 28, the agency will conduct two public meetings in the vicinity of the plant to receive comments.

Last month, the staff issued a draft environmental impact statement on an application from the plant's owner, PPL Susquehanna, LLC, to extend the current operating licenses for the two reactors at the site by 20 years. If approved, the expiration date for Susquehanna Unit 1 would be extended to July 17, 2042; for Susquehanna Unit 2, the new expiration date would be March 23, 2044.

As part of its license renewal application, PPL submitted an environmental impact report. The NRC staff reviewed that document; performed on-site assessments; consulted with federal, state and local agencies; and considered public comments on potential environmental impacts received during public meetings held on Nov. 15, 2006 in Berwick, Pa. Subsequently, the NRC staff has prepared its own environmental impact statement. In that report, the staff concludes preliminarily that the adverse environmental impacts of granting an extension are not so great that "preserving the option of license renewal for energy-planning decision-makers would be unreasonable."

The NRC's draft environmental impact statement, which is now available for public comment, will be the subject of two public meetings to be held on May 28 at the Eagles Building, 107 S. Market St. in Berwick. (Directions to the building are available at: <http://www.luzerne.edu/offcampus/Berwick/berwickdirections.asp>.) The first session will begin

at 1:30 p.m. while the second session will get under way at 7 p.m. In addition, the NRC staff will host informal discussions 1 hour prior to each meeting. NRC staff members will be available to answer questions and provide information about the license renewal review during those informal sessions, but no formal comments on environmental issues will be accepted then.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including a discussion by NRC staff of the contents of the draft environmental impact statement. The meetings will then be opened for public comment.

For planning purposes, those interested in attending are encouraged to pre-register by contacting Drew Stuyvenberg, the Environmental Project Manager for the NRC's review of the application, by telephone at 301-415-4006 or by e-mail at SusquehannaEIS@nrc.gov no later than May 23. Members of the public may also register to provide oral comments within 15 minutes of the start of each session. Individual oral comments may be limited by the number of persons who register to speak and the time available.

The NRC has been reviewing the Susquehanna license renewal application since PPL submitted it on Sept. 15, 2006. Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant has a term of 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met.

The possible environmental effects of an additional 20 years of nuclear plant operation are described in the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement, or GEIS (NUREG-1437). The agency issues a site-specific supplement to the GEIS for each plant requesting license renewal to address potential site-specific environmental impacts.

The draft environmental impact statement for Susquehanna, along with other related documents, is available for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, located at the agency's headquarters at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.; or electronically through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible through the NRC web page at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. The accession number for the Susquehanna report is ML081140337. In addition, the report is available for public inspection at the McBride Memorial Library, 500 N. Market St., Berwick, and at the Mill Memorial Library, 495 E. Main St., Nanticoke, Pa.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments received and issue a final environmental impact statement. That report will contain a final recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability of license renewal for the plant. Publication of the final environmental impact statement does not represent final NRC action on a license renewal application. The agency staff must complete its Safety Evaluation Report. Also, the NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) will review that report and make its recommendation before the agency makes a final decision on the renewal.

###