



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION FOR HARRIS NUCLEAR PLANT, SEEKS ENVIRONMENTAL INPUT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct two public meetings on Wednesday, April 18, to discuss the agency's review process for the license renewal application for the Shearon Harris nuclear power plant, located southwest of Raleigh, N.C. The sessions will also provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment on environmental issues they believe the NRC should consider during its review of the application, which requests an additional 20 years of operation.

The meetings will be held at the New Horizons Fellowship, 820 E. Williams Street in Apex. The first session will begin at 1:30 p.m. and continue until 4:30 p.m. if necessary. The second session, which will offer the same presentation as the earlier one, will get under way at 7:00 p.m. and continue until 10:00 p.m. if needed.

Both meetings will begin with NRC staff presentations on how the overall license renewal review process, which includes safety and environmental assessments, will work. Following the presentations, attendees will be able to offer their comments.

"These meetings give interested people in the area a chance to learn what it is we consider during these reviews," NRC License Renewal Project Manager Maurice Heath said. "They will also be able to suggest any environmental issues they think our review should include."

The NRC will host an open house beginning one hour before the start of each meeting to give members of the public an opportunity to talk informally with agency staff. However, formal comments must be expressed during the transcribed meetings.

Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant expires at the end of 40 years. The license may be renewed for an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating license for the Shearon Harris Unit 1 reactor is due to expire on October 24, 2026. Progress Energy submitted its license renewal application for the plant on Nov. 16, 2006.

As part of its application, the company submitted an environmental report. A copy of the application and other information is available via the NRC's web site at: www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/harris.html. In addition, the Eva H. Perry Library, located at 2100 Shepherd's Vineyard Drive in Apex, has agreed to make the license renewal application available for public inspection.

An existing NRC document, “Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants” (NUREG-1437), assesses the scope of environmental impacts that would be associated with license renewal at any nuclear power plant site. The document for which the NRC will gather environmental comments at the April 18th meetings will be a supplement to that report that is specific to the Harris plant. It will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability of the license renewal action.

At the conclusion of the information-gathering process, the NRC staff will prepare a summary of the conclusions reached and significant issues identified. A copy will be sent to each person who participated in the scoping process. The summary will also be available on the NRC’s web site.

The NRC staff will subsequently prepare a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) supplement for public comment and will hold a public meeting to solicit comments. After consideration of comments on the draft report, the NRC will prepare a final EIS supplement. Interested individuals may register to attend or present oral arguments at the April 18th meetings by contacting Samuel Hernandez of the NRC at 1-800-368-5642, ext. 4049. Those who wish to offer comments may also register at the meetings within 15 minutes of the start of each session. Individual oral comments may be limited by the time available, depending on the number of persons who register.

In addition, members of the public may send written comments on the environmental scoping process for the supplement to the GEIS to: Chief, Rules and Directive Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop T-6D59, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. during Federal workdays. To be considered, written comments should be postmarked or dropped off by May 19, 2007. Electronic comments can also be sent via e-mail to ShearonHarrisEIS@nrc.gov , also no later than May 19, 2007.

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