



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov

Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. 09-165

October 7, 2009

NRC RELEASES RANCHO SECO NUCLEAR PLANT FOR UNCONDITIONAL USE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved the request of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) to release most of the Rancho Seco nuclear power plant site near Herald, Calif., for unrestricted public use.

The contamination level of the land, approximately 80 acres, falls below NRC regulatory requirements that allow a maximum radiation dose of 25 millirem per year from residual contamination. (The average person in the United States receives about 300 millirem a year from background, or natural, radiation.)

Rancho Seco's NRC licenses will still apply to a low-level radioactive waste storage building and a dry-cask storage facility for spent nuclear fuel. The total land remaining under license is about six acres. SMUD remains responsible for the security and protection of this land and the waste storage facilities, and is required to maintain \$100 million in liability insurance coverage until all radioactive material has been removed from the site.

The NRC issued SMUD an operating license for Rancho Seco in August 1974, and the plant began commercial operations in April 1975. It was shut down in June 1989. SMUD submitted its license termination plan in 2006, and the NRC approved the plan in 2007. Recent NRC surveys verified that cleanup met the 25 millirem requirement.

NRC's Safety Evaluation Report of SMUD's request to release the site is available in the agency's ADAMS online document library at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> by entering ML092520046 in the search field.

###

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.