



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING MAY 10 IN AIKEN, S.C., TO DISCUSS SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT ON MOX FUEL FACILITY APPLICATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public meeting May 10 in Aiken, S.C., to discuss the agency's Safety Evaluation Report (SER) for a proposed Mixed-Oxide (MOX) nuclear fuel fabrication facility now under construction at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site.

The meeting will be held at the Aiken Municipal Building, 214 Park Ave., SW, in Aiken, from 7-9 p.m. NRC staff will be available afterwards to answer additional questions.

Shaw AREVA MOX Services LLC, a contractor of the Department of Energy, applied in 2006 for a license to possess and use radioactive material at the proposed MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility. The facility is designed to produce fuel for commercial nuclear power reactors using uranium and plutonium. The SER, which has been redacted to remove security-related and proprietary information, documents the NRC staff's technical safety review of MOX Services' operating license application for the facility. It does not represent a decision to issue the license. A license will be issued only if the NRC verifies the applicant has properly constructed principal structures, systems and components. That stage is expected to be several years away.

The SER, published in December 2010, contains the staff's conclusion that the applicant's descriptions, specifications, commitments and analyses provide an adequate basis for safety and safeguards of facility operations and that operation of the facility would not pose an undue risk to worker and public health and safety.

The NRC issued a Construction Authorization for the facility in March 2005, and construction is under way. The facility is part of an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation to dismantle thousands of Cold War-era nuclear weapons by using the plutonium from warheads to manufacture fuel for civilian nuclear power reactors. The facility would combine plutonium and uranium oxides to make the mixed-oxide, or MOX, fuel. It is the only MOX fuel fabrication facility being built in the United States.

The SER reviews the applicant's financial qualifications, plans for protection of classified matter, organization and administration, integrated safety analysis, nuclear criticality safety, fire protection, chemical safety, radiation safety, environmental protection and plant systems.

The redacted SER, plus additional information on the MOX licensing review, is available on the NRC website at <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html>.

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