



NRC NEWS

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR DIABLO CANYON SPENT FUEL STORAGE FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission seeks public comment on a draft supplement to the agency's environmental assessment for a spent fuel storage facility under construction at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo County, Calif. The supplement concludes that construction, operation and decommissioning of the facility will not result in a significant effect on the human environment, even when potential terrorist attacks are considered.

The NRC staff conducted the supplemental assessment by order of the Commission, in response to last year's ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in *San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace v. NRC*. In its Feb. 26 order, the Commission directed the staff to develop the supplement within 90 days and set a schedule for public comment and potential adjudicatory hearings.

The supplemental assessment considers the potential radiological impacts of terrorist acts on the Diablo Canyon spent fuel storage facility. It concludes that the probability of a successful terrorist attack on any such facility is very low. This conclusion is based on the NRC's continual evaluation of the threat environment and coordination with other federal, state and local agencies; protective measures currently in place that reduce the chances of any terrorist attack being successful; the robust design of dry cask storage systems, which provide substantial resistance to penetration; and NRC's security assessments of potential consequences of terrorist attacks at these facilities.

Although the agency concludes the likelihood of a terrorist attack on the facility resulting in a substantial radiological release is very low, the supplement also describes the potential impacts of such an event at Diablo Canyon. It concludes that any radiation dose to members of the public near the plant from a successful terrorist attack on the facility would likely be below 5 rem, even in the most severe plausible threat scenarios. In many scenarios, the hypothetical dose could be substantially less than 5 rem, or none at all. (Five rem is the maximum annual occupational dose limit for workers in the nuclear industry.)

The draft supplement will soon be available on the NRC's Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/waste.html>, by selecting "Diablo Canyon" in the "Quick Links" box.

The NRC welcomes public comment on the supplemental environmental assessment for 30 days from publication of a "Notice of Availability" in the *Federal Register*, expected shortly.

Comments may be submitted to Chief, Rulemaking, Directives and Editing Branch, Mail Stop T6-D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C., 20555-0001; by e-mail at NRCREP@nrc.gov; or by fax to 301- 492-3342. Please note Docket No. 72-26.

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