



# NRC NEWS

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## NRC ISSUES FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR DIABLO CANYON SPENT FUEL STORAGE FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued its final supplemental environmental assessment for a spent fuel storage facility under construction at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo County, Calif., concluding 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*. A draft of the supplement was published May 31 for public comment.

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 resulting in a significant radiation release 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 well 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 and the regulatory dose limit for persons outside the boundary of a spent fuel storage facility to receive from accidents.)

The NRC received 32 comment documents regarding the draft supplement, of which 12 were nearly identical. The staff grouped the comments into 17 general topics, and included its responses as an appendix to the final supplement.

The supplemental environmental assessment will 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 supplement and related documents can also be viewed in the NRC's ADAMS online documents system at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> by entering accession number "ML072400303" in the search window.

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