



NRC NEWS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION IV

611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
Arlington TX 76011-8064

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CONTACT: Breck Henderson
Phone: 817-860-8128
Cellular: 817-917-1227
e-mail: bwh@nrc.gov

NRC TO MEET WITH PUBLIC ON ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR DECOMMISSIONING SEQUOYAH FUELS

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with the public Tuesday, October 17 to discuss the status of the environmental review of decommissioning activities at the Sequoyah Fuels Corporation facility near Gore, Oklahoma, and to obtain public comments on the environmental impacts that need to be addressed.

The meeting will be from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Gore Junior High School cafeteria, 1200 Highway 10 N, Gore, Oklahoma.

In addition to the Tuesday evening meeting, two other meetings are planned for that day. In the morning, from 9 a.m. to noon, NRC staff and its consultants will tour the Sequoyah Fuels site. In the afternoon, from 2 to 4 p.m., NRC and Sequoyah Fuels Corporation will hold a technical exchange related to environmental issues at the site. This meeting will be held at the Sequoyah Fuels facility warehouse located at Interstate-40 and Highway 10.

The technical exchange will afford the NRC and its consultants an opportunity to discuss environmental issues prior to anticipated NRC requests for additional information from Sequoyah Fuels. The meeting is open for public observation, but participation is limited to NRC and Sequoyah Fuels personnel. The opportunity for full public participation will occur in the evening during the 7 p.m. meeting.

Other agencies and organizations cooperating in the environmental review are the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, and the Cherokee Nation. Most of these agencies and organizations will be represented at the 7 p.m. meeting. Francis X. (Chip) Cameron, Special Counsel for Public Liaison at NRC, will be facilitator for the meeting.

The Sequoyah Fuels facility is about two miles southeast of Gore, Oklahoma. From 1970 to 1993, the facility was used to convert uranium oxide (yellowcake) to uranium hexafluoride, a step in the production of nuclear reactor fuel. From 1987 to 1993, the facility was also used to convert depleted uranium hexafluoride to depleted uranium tetrafluoride. During this operational period,

Sequoyah Fuels disposed of radioactive material on site in accordance with NRC regulations in effect at the time. It also built ponds for chemically and radioactively contaminated materials, and disposed of sludge and other process materials by burial.

In 1998 Sequoyah Fuels submitted to NRC a site characterization report, which is a technical analysis and description of the site's radiological contamination. A study of remediation alternatives was submitted, also in 1998, followed by a decommissioning plan in 1999. The alternatives study is the principal basis for the environmental review. The remediation alternative proposed by Sequoyah Fuels is an on-site disposal cell.

The NRC is conducting an environmental review of the decommissioning and will develop an environmental impact statement to determine whether the alternative proposed by the company for remediation of the facility is acceptable. The environmental impact statement will evaluate the potential impacts of the licensee's proposal, including the effects on water resources, air quality, ecological resources, socioeconomic and community resources, human health, noise, and environmental justice. The statement will also discuss the option of disposing of the contaminated material off-site in a licensed disposal facility.

The October 17 public meeting is one of a series of public meetings held periodically to discuss various issues related to the remediation of the Sequoyah Fuels site. Before each meeting, an agenda is distributed to all interested members of the public and placed in the Stanley Tubbs Memorial Library, 101 East Cherokee, Sallisaw, Oklahoma.

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