



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION I

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NRC TO TAKE PART IN MEETINGS ON DECOMMISSIONING CRITERIA FOR FORMER REPROCESSING FACILITY IN WEST VALLEY, N.Y.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, April 17, to discuss the Commission's Final Policy Statement on cleanup criteria for the West Valley Demonstration Project, a former nuclear fuel reprocessing facility in West Valley, N.Y., that is currently being decommissioned.

The meeting is scheduled for 7 to 10 p.m. at the Ashford Office Complex, 9030 Route 219, West Valley. It will include a discussion of the perspectives, roles and responsibilities of the NRC and other federal and state agencies involved at the site. Other participants in the discussion will include representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Department of Health.

Prior to the meeting, there will be an open house from 6 to 7 p.m. at the same location to allow for individual discussions between members of the public and federal and state regulatory agency staff members.

In addition to the evening meeting on April 17, NRC staff will meet with representatives of federal and state agencies earlier that day to discuss the Final Policy Statement and the Regulators Communication Plan. This meeting will be held at the Ashford Office Complex from 8 a.m. to noon. On the evening of April 16, from 7 to 9 p.m., NRC staff will also meet with the West Valley Citizen Task Force at the same location. Both sessions will be open to the public.

The West Valley site is currently being decommissioned by the DOE and NYSERDA. Nuclear Fuel Services (NFS), Inc., formerly operated a spent nuclear fuel reprocessing facility at the site. NFS conducted reprocessing from 1966 to 1972 before permanently shutting down the facility. Reprocessing involves extracting usable uranium or plutonium from irradiated fuel so that it can be re-used.

Under the West Valley Demonstration Project Act (WVDPA) of 1980, DOE, in cooperation with NYSERDA, the site's owner, was authorized to carry out a high-level waste management demonstration project at the site that includes decommissioning. High-level waste at the site is

currently being removed from underground tanks, vitrified (solidified into glass logs) and stored for eventual off-site disposal in a federal repository. The vitrification efforts are now nearing completion.

The WVDPA also calls for the NRC to issue decommissioning criteria for the site. The NRC published a draft policy statement on the criteria in December 1999 and held a meeting to solicit public comment on January 5, 2000, in West Valley. As a result of that meeting, the agency extended the comment period to April 1, 2000. After consideration of those comments, a final policy has now been developed.

The agenda for the meeting as well as the Federal Register notice regarding the session are available on the NRC's web site at: www.nrc.gov/public-involve/public-meetings/agenda/2002-0282.pdf

In addition, the material can be viewed at the agency's Public Document Room (PDR), 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., or obtained for a fee by calling the PDR at 1-800-397-4209.

Members of the public who would like to speak at the meeting on the evening of April 17 should contact Chad Glenn of the NRC at 1-800-368-5642, ext. 6722, or by e-mail at cjg1@nrc.gov by the close of business on April 15. They may also register at the meeting site up until 15 minutes before the start of the session. Individual oral comments may be limited by the time available, depending on the number of persons who register.

Due to security concerns, all attendees are asked to bring photo identification.

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