



NRC NEWS

**UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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NRC STAFF SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON ROBINSON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR LICENSE RENEWAL

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has reached the preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude the renewal of the operating license for the H.B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit 2 in Darlington County, South Carolina.

The information is contained in a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on the proposed license renewal. The draft EIS is open for public comment until July 30 and will also be the subject of public meetings June 25 in Hartsville, South Carolina.

The NRC has been reviewing the application for extension of the H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant license since Carolina Power and Light Company (CP&L), which operates the plant, filed it in June 2002. Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current operating license for the H. B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit 2, will expire on July 31, 2010.

The possible environmental effects of an additional 20 years of nuclear plant operation are described in the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement, or GEIS (NUREG-1437). The NRC issues a site-specific supplement to the GEIS on each plant requesting license renewal to address the potential environmental impacts. Issues specific to the H.B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant are addressed in Supplement 13, which was published in draft form in May. The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that the Commission determine that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for the H.B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy-planning decision makers would be unreasonable.

On Wednesday, June 25, the NRC staff will hold two similar meetings to obtain comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meetings will be held at Coker College in Davidson Hall, 300 East College Avenue, Hartsville, South Carolina. The two sessions will begin at 1:30 in the afternoon and at 7:00 in the evening, respectively. In addition, the NRC staff will host informal discussions one hour prior to each meeting. NRC staff members will be available to answer questions and provide additional information about the license renewal process during those informal sessions, but no comment submittals on environmental issues will be accepted then.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including a discussion by NRC staff and its contractors of the contents of the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meeting will then be opened for public comment.

For planning purposes, interested parties are encouraged to pre-register to attend or to present oral comments at the June 25 meetings by contacting Richard L. Emch, Jr. of the NRC by telephone at (800) 368-5642, extension 1590, or by e-mail at RobinsonEIS@nrc.gov no later than June 20. Interested persons may also register to speak before the start of each session. Time for individual comments at the meetings may be limited to accommodate all speakers.

Written comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS will also be considered by NRC staff. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Mail Stop T-6 D 59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to RobinsonEIS@nrc.gov.

The draft supplement to the GEIS, along with other related documents, is available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room at NRC headquarters, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland; or electronically on the Internet at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1437/supplement13. In addition, Hartsville Memorial Public Library, 147 West College Avenue, Hartsville, South Carolina has agreed to make the draft supplement to the GEIS available for public inspection.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on July 30, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments provided and issue a final supplement to the GEIS. That supplement will contain a recommendation regarding the environmental acceptability for license renewal.

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