



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES POLICY STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing a policy statement to provide its consolidated views on how it will treat environmental justice matters in agency regulatory and licensing actions.

In the policy statement the NRC recognizes that the impact of the agency's regulatory or licensing actions on certain populations may be different from those on the general population due to a community's distinct cultural characteristics. The policy statement reflects the view that the disproportionately high and adverse impacts of a proposed action that fall heavily on a particular community call for close scrutiny under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In February 1994, President Clinton issued to all Federal agencies Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," which directed them to make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies and activities on minority and low-income populations.

Although independent agencies, such as the NRC, were only requested to comply with this Executive Order, the agency in a letter to President Clinton indicated that it would endeavor to carry out the measures set forth in the Order as part of its efforts to comply with NEPA.

A draft policy statement on this subject was issued for public comment on November 5, 2003. No substantive changes were made as a result of the comments received. A copy of the final statement will be published in the Federal Register shortly.

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