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Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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NRC RECEIVES OPERATING LICENSE APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED MIXED-OXIDE FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has received an operating license application from Duke, Cogema, Stone & Webster (DCS) for a proposed mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility to be constructed at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site in South Carolina.

The application, submitted Sept. 27, will soon be available for public viewing on the NRC's Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html>. Some of the application's supporting documents will not be available due to security or proprietary information considerations. The NRC staff is currently reviewing the application to determine whether it contains enough information for the required formal reviews. If the application has sufficient information, the NRC will formally "docket," or file it and will announce the opportunity for the public to request an adjudicatory hearing on the license application.

The facility, which will be owned by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, is part of a bilateral effort between the United States and the Russian Federation to convert supplies of surplus weapons-grade plutonium into more proliferation-resistant forms by blending it with uranium. Converting the plutonium into MOX fuel will enable it to be used in commercial reactors to generate electricity. In the United States, only those reactors authorized by the NRC will be permitted to use MOX fuel.

The NRC issued a construction authorization for the facility March 30, 2005. During that licensing review, the NRC staff completed an Environmental Impact Statement on the construction and operation of the proposed facility. That report is available on the NRC Web site at the above address. Information on various public meetings held regarding the MOX facility is also available there.

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