



NRC NEWS

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ASLB REQUESTS INFORMATION FROM POTENTIAL PARTIES TO YUCCA MOUNTAIN HEARING

A Nuclear Regulatory Commission Atomic Safety and Licensing Board is requesting information from potential parties to a possible adjudicatory hearing on Yucca Mountain to help establish case management requirements and procedures to help licensing boards and parties maintain the strict schedule in NRC regulations for any proceeding.

The board, referred to as the "Advisory Pre-License Application Presiding Officer Board," or Advisory PAPO Board, was established Feb. 13 to promote effective and efficient participation in the Yucca Mountain proceeding. The board will use information from potential parties to make recommendations on the hearing process to the Commission.

Potential parties would include any members of the public; public interest or nuclear industry organizations; or federal, tribal, state or local government entities that wish to introduce or litigate a legal or technical issue in the anticipated high-level waste repository proceeding.

The U.S. Department of Energy is required by law to submit an application to the NRC to construct a geologic high-level waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nev. DOE has indicated its intention to submit an application by the end of this summer. The NRC is required by law to complete its review of the application within three years, with a possible one-year extension. To meet this requirement, NRC's regulations establish a rigorous schedule for an adjudicatory hearing on the application.

The board issued its first request for information March 6, asking potential interveners to estimate the number of contentions they might file, as well as how much time they would need to answer contentions or reply to answers from other parties. The board's notice and memorandum requesting the information is attached to this press release and will be published soon in the *Federal Register*. Potential parties are asked to respond by March 24 using procedures outlined in the memorandum.

The Advisory PAPO Board anticipates requesting more information from potential parties as other procedural subjects arise concerning a potential Yucca Mountain hearing. Such

requests will be the only opportunities for potential parties to influence the board's recommendations to the Commission on procedural requirements for the hearing.

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