



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES EARLY SITE PERMIT, WORK AUTHORIZATION FOR VOGTLE SITE IN GEORGIA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Office of New Reactors has issued an Early Site Permit (ESP) and Limited Work Authorization (LWA) to Southern Nuclear Operating Company for the Vogtle ESP site near Augusta, Ga. The ESP, valid for up to 20 years, is the fourth such permit the NRC has approved.

Successful completion of the ESP process resolves many site-related safety and environmental issues, and determines the site is suitable for possible future construction and operation of a nuclear power plant. The LWA allows a narrow set of construction activities at the site. Southern Nuclear filed its ESP application Aug. 15, 2006, and filed its LWA request on Aug. 16, 2007, seeking permission for construction activities limited to placement of engineered backfill, retaining walls, lean concrete, mudmats, and a waterproof membrane.

The NRC staff's technical review of the Vogtle ESP and LWA applications covered issues such as how the site's characteristics could affect plant safety, environmental protection, and plans for coping with emergencies. The staff published a final environmental impact statement for the permits in August 2008, and a final safety evaluation on Feb. 5, 2009. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) conducted a hearing on the matter and ruled Aug. 17 that the permit could be issued.

The NRC staff is currently reviewing Southern Nuclear's application for a Combined License (COL) to build and operate two AP1000 reactors at the Vogtle site. The Vogtle ESP resolves some of the environmental issues involved in that review; the NRC would have to issue a COL before full construction could begin.

Copies of the Vogtle ESP and related documents will be available electronically in the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., and on the NRC's Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/esp/vogtle.html>.

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