



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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NRC ISSUES DRAFT REVIEW PLAN FOR MIXED OXIDE FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued for public comment a draft plan for the review of a possible future application for a mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility.

The Department of Energy has announced that it plans to construct a MOX fuel plant at its Savannah River site in South Carolina through a contract with the consortium of Duke Engineering & Services, COGEMA Inc., and Stone & Webster (known as DCS). DCS would construct and operate a MOX facility that would convert surplus weapons-grade plutonium provided by the Department of Energy into fuel to power commercial nuclear reactors. Commercial nuclear power plants in the United States currently use uranium as fuel; the mixed oxide fuel would be a combination of uranium and plutonium.

Under NRC regulations, potential operators of commercial plutonium facilities, such as a MOX fuel fabrication plant, must obtain NRC's approval prior to initiating construction, and the NRC must later confirm that the facility has been constructed in accordance with the license application. DCS has not yet submitted an application to the NRC for such a facility.

The Standard Review Plan defines standards and criteria that the NRC staff would use in reviewing an application to decide if there is reasonable assurance that a MOX fuel fabrication facility will be constructed and operated in a manner that will provide reasonable protection of the health and safety of workers and the public and the environment and that will not be inimical to the common defense and security.

A copy of the draft "Standard Review Plan for the Review of an Application for a Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility" (NUREG-1718) is available by writing to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Distribution Services, Washington, DC 20555-0001. A copy is also available on the NRC's website at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/SR1718/index.html>.

Comments should be submitted by March 13 to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington DC 20555-0001. Comments may also be submitted electronically by selecting the "comments" link on the above website.

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