



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC PROPOSES TO CHANGE REGULATIONS ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN TO BE CONSISTENT WITH EPA CHANGES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its regulations to govern the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) proposed high-level radioactive waste disposal facility at Yucca Mountain, Nev. The amendments would adopt the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) recently proposed revisions to its standards for radiation doses that could occur more than 10,000 years after waste disposal.

The Energy Policy Act requires the NRC to make its regulations consistent with EPA's standards for Yucca Mountain.

The new EPA standards, published Aug. 22, would leave in place the current standard of a peak dose of 15 millirems for the first 10,000 years following disposal. After 10,000 years, the standard would be 350 millirems. These same EPA values would be contained in the revised NRC regulations.

The proposed NRC regulations also indicate that, in demonstrating compliance with the radiation dose standards, DOE must assess the effects of climate changes more than 10,000 years after disposal. The proposal specifies a range of values that DOE should draw from when representing these changes. The climate change analysis would be limited to the effects of increased water flow to the repository as a result of the change (up to approximately 6 times greater than would be expected today), and any resulting release of radioactive materials to the environment.

In addition, the proposed NRC changes specify that DOE should calculate radiation doses to workers at the Yucca Mountain facility using current scientific methods, in the same way that EPA is proposing for calculating doses for members of the public.

Interested persons may submit comments on the proposed NRC regulations within 60 days of publication of NRC's proposed rule in the *Federal Register*, expected shortly. The comments should be sent by mail to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff; e-mail to SECY@nrc.gov; or fax to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, at 301-415-1101.

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