



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSAL REQUIRING ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS FOR MOST AGENCY HEARINGS

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a proposed rule that would require electronic submissions for all agency hearings. Presently, electronic submissions are required only with respect to an application for a high-level radioactive waste repository.

If the proposal becomes a final rule, the Commission expects NRC adjudicatory proceedings will be expedited and the cost reduced.

Under the proposed rule, electronic submissions would need to be made to all of the NRC's adjudicatory boards and to other parties in the proceedings. Under the proposed rule, exceptions would be made to allow paper filings only in limited circumstances.

The proposed rule builds on developments in the federal courts as well as previous NRC rules and creates a uniform system for electronic submissions. Since 2001, the NRC has encouraged power reactor licensees to submit documents either through an electronic information exchange system or on CD-Rom. In 2003, the NRC issued a final rule that allowed licensees, vendors, applicants and members of the public to submit documents, including Freedom of Information Act requests, in an electronic format. Almost all parties in adjudicatory proceedings currently file by electronic mail, although they are not required to do so.

The public may submit comments on the proposed rule and related draft guidance within 75 days of publication of the notice in the *Federal Register*, expected soon. Comments submitted later than this date may be considered if practical.

The NRC staff will also hold a public meeting to demonstrate electronic filings and answer questions on Jan. 10, 2006. The public meeting will be held in the auditorium at NRC headquarters, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.

Comments can be submitted to: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C., 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff. Comments can also be hand-carried to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on federal work days, or they can be faxed to 301-415-1101. E-mail comments can also be sent to SECY@nrc.gov. In addition,

comments can also be submitted through the NRC's rulemaking Web page, at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov> . Please include 3150-RIN AH74 in the subject line of your comments.

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