



NRC NEWS

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2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov> E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630) 829-9663
Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

NRC ISSUES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR MONTICELLO LICENSE RENEWAL, ANNOUNCES MARCH 22 PUBLIC MEETING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has reached the preliminary conclusion that there are no environmental impacts which would preclude renewal of the operating license for the Monticello Nuclear Power Plant located at Monticello, Minn. The plant is operated by Nuclear Management Co.

The NRC is seeking public comment on the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed license renewal which includes the agency's preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts of renewal of the Monticello license for an additional 20 years.

The draft EIS is open for public comment until May 4 and will also be the subject of public meetings on March 22 in Monticello.

"The comments and views of the public help assure that we have identified and addressed the appropriate issues in our environmental review of the Monticello license renewal application," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. "The March 22 meeting also gives us a chance to discuss any issues and questions firsthand with the public."

The NRC has been reviewing the proposed extension of the Monticello license since Nuclear Management Co. submitted its application in March 2005. Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for up to an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. The current NRC license at Monticello will expire on Sept. 8, 2010.

The possible environmental effects of an additional 20 years of nuclear plant operation are described in the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement or GEIS (NUREG-1437). The NRC issues a site-specific supplement to the GEIS on each plant requesting license renewal to address the potential environmental impacts. The NRC staff's preliminary recommendation is that the adverse environmental impacts of license renewal for the Monticello reactor are not so great that preserving the option of license renewal for energy-planning decision makers would be unreasonable.

On Wednesday, March 22, the NRC staff will hold two similar meetings in Monticello to obtain comments on the draft supplement to the GEIS. The meetings will be held at the Monticello Community Center, 505 Walnut St. The sessions will begin at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. In addition, the

NRC staff will host informal discussions one hour prior to each meeting. NRC staff members will be available to answer questions and provide additional information about the license renewal process during those informal sessions. No formal comments on environmental issues will be accepted during these pre-meeting discussions.

The two sessions will begin with identical overviews, including presentations by NRC staff on the draft supplement to the GEIS. There will then be an opportunity for public comments.

Written comments on the draft Monticello supplement to the GEIS will also be considered by NRC staff. Comments should be submitted either by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop T-6D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to MonticelloEIS@nrc.gov.

The draft EIS and other documents related to the license renewal application are available for public review at the Monticello Public Library, 220 W. 6th St., Monticello, and the Buffalo Public Library, 18 NW Lake Blvd., Buffalo. Documents are also available on the NRC's web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/monticello.html>.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on May 4, the NRC staff will consider and address the comments as it prepares the final Monticello supplement to the GEIS. The supplement is scheduled to be issued in September.

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