



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD TO HOLD PRE-HEARING CONFERENCE ON VOGTLE EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) will hold a pre-hearing conference Feb. 13 in Waynesboro, Ga., to hear arguments on several contentions filed concerning an early site permit application for the Vogtle nuclear power plant site.

The conference will focus on arguments for and against the admissibility of several contentions filed by various groups regarding the application by Southern Nuclear Operating Co. for an early site permit for up to two additional reactors at the Vogtle site, 26 miles southeast of Augusta, Ga. The Vogtle plant currently has two operating reactors. Southern Nuclear submitted the application Aug. 15.

The contentions were filed jointly by the Center for a Sustainable Coast, Savannah Riverkeeper, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, the Atlanta Women's Action for New Directions, and the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. The contentions raise issues under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) concerning the potential impacts of two new reactors on the aquatic resources of the Savannah River, low-income and minority communities nearby, potential terrorist attacks, and energy alternatives. The three-judge ASLB will hear arguments from the petitioners, the NRC staff, and Southern Nuclear.

Several weeks after the pre-hearing conference, the board will issue its ruling on whether the petitioners have demonstrated legal standing and raised viable issues that should be admitted as contentions in an adjudicatory hearing regarding the ESP application.

The pre-hearing conference will begin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 13, in the auditorium of the Augusta Technical College's Waynesboro/Burke Campus, 216 Highway 24 South, Waynesboro, Ga.

Members of the public who are not parties to the proceeding may submit comments in writing, known as "written limited appearance statements," concerning the contentions to be discussed during the conference. These statements become part of the hearing docket and provide members of the public an opportunity to make the board and/or the parties aware of their concerns in connection with the issues. The board does not intend to conduct oral limited appearance sessions at this point, although it may do so in the future at locations near the proposed facility; any such sessions will be announced separately.

Written limited appearance statements can be submitted at any time and should be sent to: Office of the Secretary, Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C., 20555-0001; or by fax to (301) 415-1101; or by e-mail to hearingdocket@nrc.gov .

Copies should also be sent to the chairman of the licensing board as follows: Administrative Judge G. Paul Bollwerk, III, Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel (Mail Stop T-3F23), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C., 20555 - 0001; or by fax to (301) 415-5599; or by e-mail to gpb@nrc.gov.

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