



NRC NEWS

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NRC REVISES ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE FOR VOGTLE EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is revising its schedule for issuing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an Early Site Permit (ESP) at the Vogtle site near Waynesboro, Ga., about 26 miles southeast of Augusta.

The NRC staff, after interactions with the ESP applicant, Southern Nuclear Operating Company, and rulings from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB), expects to issue a draft EIS in mid-September, with a final EIS expected in July 2008. The NRC and the applicant identified the need for additional information to ensure the staff can properly conduct its review.

The ESP process allows an applicant to resolve certain safety and environmental issues related to siting prior to submitting an application to build and operate a new nuclear power plant. An ESP denotes a site's suitability for construction and operation of a nuclear plant. Southern Nuclear filed the Vogtle application on Aug. 15, 2006. If approved, the permit would allow Southern Nuclear to reserve the site for up to 20 years. A future application for a construction permit or combined license at the Vogtle site could then reference the ESP.

The staff continues to expect to complete its Safety Evaluation Report on the Vogtle application by May 2008. Along with that report and the EIS, the NRC's independent Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards must issue a report on the ESP application, and the ASLB must conclude a hearing on the application before the agency can reach a final conclusion on issuing the ESP. The revised overall review schedule will be available on the NRC Web site at this address:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/esp/vogtle.html> .

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