



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES LICENSE TO GE-HITACHI FOR LASER URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT IN NORTH CAROLINA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission today issued a license to General Electric-Hitachi Global Laser Enrichment LLC (GLE) to construct and operate a uranium enrichment plant using laser technology in Wilmington, N.C.

The license authorizes GLE to enrich uranium up to 8 percent by weight in the fissile isotope U-235, using a laser-based technology. This low-enriched uranium will be used in fuel for commercial nuclear power reactors. GLE plans to construct the plant at the site of GE-Hitachi's existing Global Nuclear Fuel-America's fuel fabrication plant.

GLE submitted its license application on June 26, 2009. The NRC staff conducted thorough safety and environmental reviews of the proposed facility. A Safety Evaluation Report ([NUREG-2120](#)) and Final Environmental Impact Statement ([NUREG-1938](#)) were published in February. The Safety Evaluation Report documented the staff's conclusions that GLE's proposed facility complies with NRC regulations and would not pose an undue risk to the health and safety of workers or the public. The Environmental Impact Statement concluded there would be no significant environmental impacts that would preclude licensing the facility.

The NRC's review of the GLE license application provided several opportunities for public comment and participation, including public meetings in Wilmington in July 2008 to discuss the review process; May 2009 to discuss the scope of the NRC's environmental review; July 2010 to present the draft EIS and receive public comment; and May 2012 to present the final safety and environmental reports.

A notice of opportunity to request an adjudicatory hearing was published Jan. 13, 2010; no hearing requests were received. Under NRC regulations, an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board conducted a mandatory hearing on the staff's review in July. The Board issued its decision authorizing the staff to issue the license Sept. 19.

The NRC staff will conduct inspections during the construction and operation of the GLE facility. The agency plans to hold a public meeting in Wilmington before construction begins to explain its oversight plans to the public.

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