An NRC quarterly newsletter providing licensing information on a Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility

Mixed Oxide Xchange

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission NUREG/BR-0284 September 2002

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Public Meeting held in North Augusta, Georgia

On August 27, 2002, NRC staff held a public meeting in North Augusta, South Carolina to provide information to the public on the Draft Safety Evaluation Report (DSER). The meeting consisted of a general session with presentations by Andrew Persinko, David Brown, and John Hull and a poster board session with technical discussion by the lead technical specialists in each of the eight main technical areas of the DSER.

MOX project manager Andrew Persinko gave an overview of the DSER and NRC's licensing and review process. The schedule for future reviews concerning

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DCS Responds to Draft SER

On July 9, 2002, Duke Cogema Stone & Webster (DCS) transmitted its response to the staff's Draft Safety Evaluation Report (DSER) on the Construction Authorization Request (CAR). NRC had requested DCS' review of the DSER for technical accuracy.

In a 35-page enclosure, DCS provided a representative list of technical comments

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Dave Brown, NRC, discusses the environmental aspects of the Draft Safety Evaluation Report on the proposed construction of a Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility at NRC's August 27th Public Meeting in North Augusta, Georgia.

NRC Quality Assurance At Work

On August 6-8, 2002, NRC staff visited DCS offices in Charlotte, North Carolina to begin a two-part in-office review of quality assurance (QA) issues for the proposed Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MFFF). QA issues include organization and responsibilities, quality levels for different structures, systems and components in the proposed MFFF, and the overall application of the NRC-approved MOX Project Quality Assurance Plan, or MPQAP. The MPQAP was approved by the NRC in October 2001.

A key element of the MPQAP is the definition of quality levels for various systems, structures and components in the proposed MFFF. For example, items that would be relied on for safety, or IROFS, are designated "quality level 1," or QL-1. Four primary quality levels, QL-1 down to QL-4, are applied in order of decreasing importance to safety.

In the August 2002 meetings, NRC staff identified different structures, systems or components in the MFFF design that would have different quality levels. The staff then evaluated the appropriateness of the QL designations, in the context of each system's relative importance to safety in the proposed MFFF. This information will be used during a second in-office meeting planned for Cogema-SGN offices in Bagnols-sur-Ceze, France in September.

Meeting Summaries

June 18, 2002 NRC staff and Framatome ANP met to discuss issues related to Topical Report BAW-10238NP, "MOX Fuel Design Report"

August 28-30, 2002 In-office review of MOX supporting information in the areas of nuclear criticality safety and chemical safety at DCS offices in Charlotte, NC

NRC's Mixed Oxide Fuel Infoweb

Find meeting summaries, updates related to MOX, frequently asked questions and past issues of the *Mixed Oxide Xchange*. See: **http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html.**

The Cogema-SGN office is designing the MOX process for DCS. NRC staff will visit this office to examine how the MPQAP quality levels are being applied in the design of the MOX process. For example, QL-1 items require higher levels of design change authorization, data reliability, technical basis and document process control than QL-4 items. The NRC review is designed to ensure that these higher level functions are working and will provide the necessary level of quality prescribed in the MPQAP.

The staff's findings will be provided in a report this fall. Please check our web site often for new reports on the staff's licensing activities: http://www.nrc.gov/materials/fuel-cycle-fac/mox/licensing.html.

Revised DCS Environmental Report Received by NRC

On July 11, 2002, NRC received from DCS a revised Environmental Report (ER) for technical review. The ER contains information previously provided in response to NRC requests for additional information, as well as new information regarding how changes to the Department of Energy's (DOE) Surplus Plutonium Disposition (SPD) Program will affect the proposed MFFF. This information will assist the staff in preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement, due to be issued for public comment in February 2003.

DOE SPD Program changes and the NRC's decision to delay issuance of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement were described in the March 2002 and June 2002 editions of the *Mixed Oxide Xchange*, respectively .

The NRC will hold public informational meetings in September to describe the DOE SPD Program changes and the new schedule for the Environmental Impact Statement. Meetings will be held 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the following locations:

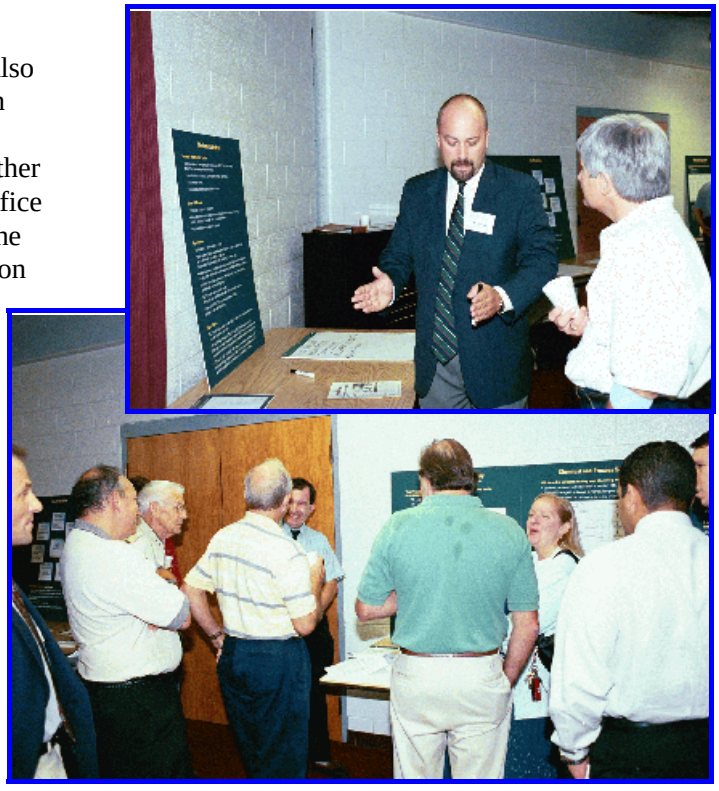
September 17, 2002
N. Augusta Community Center
495 Brookside Avenue
North Augusta, South Carolina

September 18, 2002
Coastal Georgia Center
305 Fahm Street
Savannah, Georgia

September 19, 2002
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
600 E. Fourth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina

(PUBLIC MEETING--Continued from page 1)
the Construction Authorization Request was also outlined. NRC Health Physicist David Brown presented on the status and schedule of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and other environmental issues. John Hull, from the Office of the General Counsel, briefly talked about the status of MOX public hearings. Chip Cameron served as moderator taking questions and comments from the audience throughout the meeting.

After the general session, the attendees were invited to participate in a poster board session where they could view poster boards on chemical safety, criticality safety, confinement and ventilation systems, electrical/ instrumentation and control, fire protection, mechanical systems, quality assurance, and safety analysis. A lead technical specialist for each area was available to answer questions.



(Top) Bill Gleaves, NRC, discusses plant systems and (bottom picture, facing camera in blue shirt) Alex Murray, NRC, discusses red oil and chemical safety at the August 27th Public Meeting.

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organized by chapters of the DSER. In addition to editorial comments, clarification of statements and some responses to open items were made in the areas of safety assessment of the design basis, nuclear criticality safety, fire protection, chemical and process safety, radiation safety, aqueous polishing process and chemistry, ventilation and confinement systems, electrical systems, instrumentation and control systems, fluid transport systems, human factors and management measures.

DCS agreed with a majority of the open items that were identified in Appendix A of the DSER. DCS encouraged the staff to conduct further in-office reviews at DCS' Charlotte offices, to resolve some of the remaining open items. For the areas of criticality and chemical safety in particular, DCS thought that such in-office reviews would be helpful for staff because additional supporting documents would be available there for NRC review.

Overall, DCS found that the review of the CAR was complete. However, DCS expressed concern with the "apparent disparity in the level of detail requested by the Staff from one chapter to the next for construction authorization".

GANE's Request for Security Clearances

On June 7, 2002, Georgians Against Nuclear Energy (GANE) submitted to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) "[GANE's] Application For Security Clearances." GANE is seeking Level L security clearances for three individuals who will be representing GANE in upcoming hearings on the DCS request for authority to construct the proposed MFFF. An "L" access authorization permits an individual access on a need-to-know basis to classified information. GANE seeks to review classified information which it anticipates will be generated in the course of the hearings.

On July 5, NRC staff responded to GANE's application, and requested that the ASLB certify to the Commission the question on the extent to which special hearing procedures applicable to handling classified information should be used in the MFFF hearing. On July 18, 2002, the ASLB certified this question to the Commission.

ALPHABET SOUP

(commonly used acronyms in this newsletter)

ASLB	Atomic Safety Licensing Board	MFFF	Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility
CAR	Construction Authorization Request	MOX	Mixed Oxide Exchange
DCS	Duke Cogema Stone & Webster	MPQAP	MOX Project Quality Assurance Plan
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy	NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
DSER	Draft Safety Evaluation Report	PM	Project Manager
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	QL	Quality Level
GANE	Georgians Against Nuclear Energy	SPD	Surplus Plutonium Disposition
IROFS	Items Relied on for Safety		

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