

collection techniques or other forms of information technology?

A copy of the draft supporting statement may be viewed free of charge at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW (lower level), Washington, DC. OMB clearance requests are available at the NRC worldwide web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/PUBLIC/OMB/index.html>).

The document will be available on the NRC home page site for 60 days after the signature date of this notice.

Comments and questions about the information collection requirements may be directed to the NRC Clearance Officer, Brenda Jo. Shelton, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, T-6 E6, Washington, DC 20555-0001, by telephone at 301-415-7233, or by Internet electronic mail at BJS1@NRC.GOV.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 2nd day of February 2000.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Brenda Jo. Shelton,

NRC Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 00-2928 Filed 2-8-00; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

ACTION: Notice of pending NRC action to submit an information collection request to OMB and solicitation of public comment.

SUMMARY: The NRC is preparing a submittal to OMB for review of continued approval of information collections under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Information pertaining to the requirement to be submitted:

1. *The title of the information collection:* 10 CFR part 60—"Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Wastes in Geologic Repositories".

2. *Current OMB approval number:* 3150-0127.

3. *How often the collection is required:* The information need only be submitted one time.

4. *Who is required or asked to report:* State or Indian Tribes, or their representatives, requesting consultation with the NRC staff regarding review of a potential high-level waste geologic

repository site, or wishing to participate in a license application review for a potential geologic repository.

5. *The number of annual respondents:* Two.

6. *The number of hours needed annually to complete the requirement or request:* An average of 40 hours per response for consultation requests, 80 hours per response for license application review participation proposals, and 1 hour per response for statements of representative authority. The total burden for all responses is estimated to be 242 hours.

7. *Abstract:* Part 60 requires States and Indian Tribes to submit certain information to the NRC if they request consultation with the NRC staff concerning the review of a potential repository site, or wish to participate in a license application review for a potential repository. Representatives of States or Indian Tribes must submit a statement of their authority to act in such a representative capacity. The information submitted by the States and Indian Tribes is used by the Director of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards as a basis for decisions about the commitment of NRC staff resources to the consultation and participation efforts. On February 22, 1999, the Commission proposed to modify its generic criteria for disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive wastes in geologic repositories at 10 CFR part 60 to make clear that they will not apply, nor be the subject of litigation, in any NRC licensing proceeding for a repository at Yucca Mountain (64 FR 8639). Information collection requirements applicable to the licensing of a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain were proposed at that time, in 10 CFR part 63, and will be issued later this year.

Submit, by April 10, 2000, comments that address the following questions:

1. Is the proposed collection of information necessary for the NRC to properly perform its functions? Does the information have practical utility?
2. Is the burden estimate accurate?
3. Is there a way to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected?
4. How can the burden of the information collection be minimized, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology?

A copy of the draft supporting statement may be viewed free of charge at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW (lower level), Washington, DC. OMB clearance requests are available at the NRC worldwide web site ([http://](http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/PUBLIC/OMB/index.html)

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Comments and questions about the information collection requirements may be directed to the NRC Clearance Officer, Brenda Jo. Shelton, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, T-6 E 6, Washington, DC 20555-0001, by telephone at (301) 415-7233, or by Internet electronic mail at BJS1@NRC.GOV.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 2nd day of February, 2000.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Brenda Jo. Shelton,

NRC Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 00-2931 Filed 2-8-00; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Public Comment on the Allegations Program Under the New Regulatory Oversight Program

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has proposed significant revisions to its process for overseeing the safety performance of commercial nuclear power plants that include the inspection, assessment, and enforcement program. As part of its proposal, the NRC staff established a new regulatory oversight framework with a set of performance indicators and associated thresholds, developed a new baseline inspection program that supplements and verifies the performance indicators, and created a continuous assessment process that includes a method for consistently determining the appropriate regulatory actions in response to varying levels of safety performance. The NRC also has a long established allegation program to provide a mechanism for individuals to identify safety and regulatory issues directly to the NRC. The NRC is soliciting comments from interested public interest groups, the regulated industry, States, and concerned citizens as to the functioning of the allegation process under the new reactor regulatory oversight program. The NRC staff will consider comments it receives in determining how the agency will pursue structuring the allegation program under the new reactor oversight process. At the conclusion of

the public comment period, the NRC will schedule a public meeting to be held at the NRC Headquarters at 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, to discuss the comments and options for revising the allegation program.

DATES: The comment period expires April 10, 2000. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted either electronically or via U.S. mail. Submit written comments to: Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: T-6 D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Hand deliver comments to: 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Federal workdays. Copies of comments received may be examined at the NRC's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W. (Lower Level), Washington, DC, 20555. Electronic comments may be submitted via email to: NRCREP@NRC.gov

Copies of the Commission Paper dated November 23, 1999, entitled, "Impact of Changes to the Inspection Program for Reactors on Implementing the Allegation Program" (SECY-99-273) may be obtained at the following web site: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html>. The Commission's direction to the staff may be obtained at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SRM/index.html>. Information on the revised reactor oversight process may be obtained at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html>.

Additional information on the inspection pilot program may be obtained from the NRC's Public Document Room at 2120 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20003-1527, telephone 202-634-3272.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edward Baker, Agency Allegation Advisor, or Carl Mohrwinkel, Assistant Agency Allegation Advisor, Mail Stop: O-5 E7, Office of the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, telephone Mr. Baker at 301-415-8529, or Mr. Mohrwinkel at 301-415-1293.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

To encourage individuals to identify safety concerns, the allegation program includes provisions to protect the

identity of the individual, to provide timely resolution of the issue(s), and to communicate the staff's understanding of the issue(s), status of the staff's review, and ultimate resolution of the issue(s) in a timely manner. For individuals who do not want the licensee or employer to know they raised an issue to the NRC, the agency's policy is to take all reasonable measures to protect the identity of the individual. Under the current program, an allegation is defined as "A declaration, statement, or assertion of impropriety or inadequacy associated with NRC-regulated activities, the validity of which has not been established." Historically, the staff has interpreted this definition very broadly and not set a threshold for placing issues in the allegation program, as long as the issues involve an area regulated by the NRC, were not already known by the staff to be true or valid, and were not covered by another process, e.g., petitions processed under Section 2.206 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2.206 petitions).

In developing the revised reactor oversight process, the staff integrated the use of performance indicators and inspections. Using a risk-informed approach, the staff was able to focus the baseline inspection program on inspecting risk-significant areas that are not adequately covered by performance indicators. The overall objective of the program is to assure licensee performance meets the objectives for each of the associated cornerstones of safety. Within the baseline inspection program there are three basic types of inspection. Inspections are (1) used to verify performance in areas that are not measured by a performance indicator, (2) augment the information provided by performance indicators that do not sufficiently measure performance in a cornerstone area, and (3) verify the accuracy and completeness of the data used as the basis for performance indicators used to fully measure performance of a cornerstone area. The end result is that the scope of activities being inspected is more clearly defined and risk informed. There is also less flexibility within the baseline inspection program to inspect issues that emerge from allegations if they do not relate to a stated inspectable area objective.

Conducting an inspection or an evaluation to quickly resolve a safety significant allegation is consistent with the risk informed approach of the revised reactor oversight process. However, the allegation program's emphasis on timely resolution places a similar, and only slightly lesser, burden

on the staff for timely resolution of issues with less safety or risk significance. For these issues, staff resolution is driven by the timeliness goal, which was established to be responsive to the alleege, rather than being risk-informed. For those allegations requiring inspection, this often results in revising inspection schedules or scheduling additional inspections to meet the timeliness goal, when the safety or risk significance associated with the issue doesn't warrant that kind of response, even if the issue is assumed to be valid. For those allegations that are referred to other agencies or to licensees for evaluation and response back to the NRC, this may result in redirecting resources from work activities involving higher safety or risk significance in order to meet NRC's requested response date.

Another consequence of implementing the baseline inspection program is that there is a greater potential the reactor licensees will know when an inspection is allegation-related. For allegations that involve issues outside the inspectable areas or are reviewed during inspections that were not on the inspection schedule, it is likely that the licensee or employer will question why the staff is conducting the inspection, unless there has been an event that warrants a reactive inspection. While the staff intends to continue its policy of not informing the licensee when inspections are allegation-related, it is likely the licensee or employer will be able to determine when that is the case. This may increase the potential that a licensee or employer will be able to identify who submitted an allegation to the NRC, based on the area being inspected and its similarity to issues previously raised within the licensee's organization. As a result, individuals may be less inclined to provide safety or regulatory issues to the NRC or they may provide issues to the NRC without first raising the issue internally. Neither of these outcomes is desirable.

Scope of the Public Comment Period and Questions

This public comment period will focus on obtaining industry and public views on the allegation program as it may exist under the new oversight process. To assist respondents the following questions are included as a guide. Comments should be as specific as possible and the use of examples is encouraged.

- Which of the four Options contained in the Commission paper will strike the best balance between the

efficient use of agency resources and the need for allégers to feel the NRC will address their issue(s) and protect their identity, if they so desire?

- Does one of the Options for implementing the allegation program provide more adequate assurance that the NRC can be more certain that through information provided by allégers, plants are being operated safely?

- Does one of the Options for implementing the allegation program under the new oversight process enhance public confidence by increasing the predictability, consistency, clarity and objectivity of the NRC's allegation process?

- Does one of the Options for implementing the allegations program under the new oversight process improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory process focusing agency resources on those issues with the most safety significance?

- Does one of the Options for implementing the allegation program under the new oversight process reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on licensees?

- What Options, beyond those stated in the Commission paper, should be considered?

- Should the Commission implement any changes in the allegation program for all reactor licensees or should any changes be implemented in a pilot program before being implemented at all reactor facilities?

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of February 2000.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Edward T. Baker III,

Agency Allegations Advisor, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 00-2929 Filed 2-8-00; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 72-22]

Private Fuel Storage, L.L.C., Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation, Skull Valley Indian Reservation, Tooele County, UT; Notice of Intent To Cooperate in the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement

Private Fuel Storage, L.L.C. (PFS or the applicant) proposes to construct and operate an independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) at the reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians, which is bordered on all sides by Tooele County, Utah. The

proposed Private Fuel Storage Facility (PFSF) would be constructed on an 820-acre site that would store spent nuclear fuel (SNF) received from commercial U.S. nuclear power plants. The applicant proposes to transport SNF from the reactor sites to the PFSF via rail. Currently the rail line stops approximately 25 miles north of the proposed site. The applicant has proposed the following two methods to transport the SNF the last 25 miles:

- (1) Construct an intermodal transfer facility on land managed by the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). At the intermodal transfer facility, SNF would be transferred from rail to heavy/haul vehicles for transport to the site via Skull Valley Road, or

- (2) Construct a rail line on the western side of Skull Valley, along the base of the Cedar Mountains. The rail line would be constructed on land managed by BLM.

Of the two methods identified above, construction of the rail line is the applicant's preferred approach.

The project as proposed, requires approval from four Federal agencies, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and BLM, and the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The applicant must obtain a license from NRC, a right-of-way (ROW) from BLM for either the proposed rail line or the proposed intermodal transfer facility, approval from BIA for a proposed lease agreement between the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians and PFS, and approval from the STB to construct the proposed rail line.

On June 20, 1997, pursuant to 10 CFR part 72, PFS submitted an application to NRC for a license to receive, possess, store, and transfer SNF at an ISFSI to be constructed and operated on the Reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians. A notice of consideration of issuance of an NRC materials license for the proposed PFSF and notice of opportunity for hearing were published in the **Federal Register** on July 31, 1997 (62 FR 41099). By letter dated August 28, 1998, PFS submitted a revision to its application for an NRC license to reflect its proposal to construct and utilize a rail line over public lands managed by BLM for the transportation of SNF to its site.

The applicant executed a lease agreement with the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians to permit construction and operation of its proposed facility on the Skull Valley Band Reservation. On May 23, 1997, BIA conditionally approved the lease agreement, contingent upon the completion of an

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the inclusion of mitigation measures identified in the Record of Decision, and the issuance of an NRC license to construct, maintain, and operate the PFSF. The lease includes 820 acres of land where the PFSF is proposed to be located, a 202-acre utility and road ROW from the Skull Valley Road to the PFSF, and a buffer zone adjacent to the PFSF to the south and east, including five sections of land (one section of land consists of one square mile or 640 acres).

By letter dated August 28, 1998, PFS applied to BLM for a ROW to construct a rail line and related facilities for a distance of approximately 32 miles on the western side of Skull Valley, along the base of the Cedar Mountains from Skunk Ridge, Utah, to the PFSF. PFS also applied for a separate ROW to construct and operate an intermodal transfer facility 1.8 miles west of the intersection of Interstate 80 and Skull Valley Road. The rail line would traverse land that is included within the BLM Pony Express Resource Management Plan (RMP). The current Pony Express RMP does not allow for major ROWs such as a rail line in this area, and the PFS proposal would, therefore, require an amendment to the RMP prior to granting the requested ROW. BLM published a notice of intent to prepare a RMP amendment in the **Federal Register** on April 15, 1999 (64 FR 18633).

On January 5, 2000, PFS filed an application with STB to construct and operate the proposed rail line from Skunk Ridge, Utah, to the proposed storage facility. The application was filed in STB Finance Docket No. 33824, *Great Salt Lake & Southern Railroad, L.L.C.—Construction and Operations in Tooele County, Utah*.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires all Federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their actions. Because the NRC, BIA, BLM, and STB required actions for the construction and operation of the PFSF are related, the agencies have agreed to cooperate in the preparation of an EIS. In preparing the EIS, NRC will serve as the lead agency, and BLM, BIA, and STB will serve as cooperating agencies.

NRC published a notice of intent to prepare an EIS and conduct a scoping process in the **Federal Register** on May 1, 1998 (63 FR 24197). As a part of the scoping process, a public scoping meeting was conducted on June 2, 1998, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The scoping process also provided interested parties with an opportunity to provide written comments. At the conclusion of that