

generated by neutron activation of air. In most cases, this will be kept as low as practicable by using gases other than air for supporting experiments. Experiments that are supported by air are designed to minimize production of argon-41. Yearly doses to persons in unrestricted areas will be at or below established 10 CFR part 20 limits. Routine releases of radioactive liquid effluents can be carefully monitored and controlled in a manner that will ensure compliance with the regulations. Solid radioactive wastes will be shipped in approved containers to an authorized disposal site or to a facility licensed to treat and consolidate radioactive waste. These wastes should not require more than a few shipping containers a year.

Based on experience with other research reactors, specifically TRIGA reactors operating in the 1 to 2 MWt range, the annual release of gaseous and liquid effluents to unrestricted areas should be less than 30 curies (1,110,000 MBq) and 0.01 curies (370 MBq), respectively.

No release of potentially harmful chemical substances will occur during normal operation. Small amounts of chemicals and/or high-solid content water may be released from the facility through the sanitary sewer during periodic blowdown of the cooling tower or from laboratory experiments. The quality of secondary cooling water may be maintained using biocides, corrosion inhibitors and pH control chemicals. The use of these chemicals for this purpose is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The small amounts of laboratory chemicals that may be used in research laboratories are disposed of in accordance with EPA and state requirements.

Other potential effects of the facility, such as aesthetics, noise, societal or impact on local flora and fauna are expected to be too small to measure.

#### *Environmental Effects of Accidents*

Accidents ranging from the failure of experiments up to the largest core damage and fission product release considered possible result in doses that are less than 10 CFR part 20 limits and are considered negligible with respect to the environment.

#### *Unavoidable Effects of Facility Construction and Operation*

The unavoidable effects of construction and operation involve the materials used in construction that cannot be recovered and the fissionable material used in the reactor. No adverse impact on the environment is expected from either of these unavoidable effects.

#### *Alternatives to Construction and Operation of the Facility*

To accomplish the objectives associated with research reactors, there are no suitable alternatives. Some of these objectives are training of students in the operation of reactors, production of radioisotopes, and use of neutron and gamma ray beams to conduct experiments.

#### *Long-Term Effects of Facility Construction and Operation*

The long-term effects of research facilities are considered to be beneficial as a result of the contribution to scientific knowledge and training. Because of the relatively small amount of capital resources involved and the small impact on the environment, very little irreversible and irretrievable commitment is associated with such facilities.

#### *Costs and Benefits of Facility Alternatives*

The costs are on the order of several millions of dollars with very little environmental impact. The benefits include, but are not limited to, some combination of the following: conduct of activation analyses, conduct of neutron radiography, training of operating personnel, and education of students. Some of these activities could be conducted using particle accelerators or radioactive sources which would be more costly and less efficient. There is no reasonable alternative to a nuclear research reactor for conducting this spectrum of activities.

#### *Conclusion*

The staff concludes that there will be no significant environmental impact associated with the licensing of research reactors or critical facilities designed to operate at power levels of 2 MWt or lower and that no environmental impact statements are required to be written for the issuance of construction permits, operating licenses or license renewals for such facilities.

*Revised:* March 30, 2004.

[FR Doc. 04-8046 Filed 4-8-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

## **NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

### **Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Meeting of the Subcommittee on Reactor Fuels; Notice of Meeting**

The ACRS Subcommittee on Reactor Fuels will hold a meeting on April 21,

2004, Room T-2B1, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

Portions of the meeting may be closed to public attendance to discuss Duke Power or Framatome proprietary information per 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(4).

*The agenda for the subject meeting shall be as follows: Wednesday, April 21, 2004—8:30 a.m. until the conclusion of business.*

The purpose of this meeting is to review proposed license amendment to authorize the use of mixed oxide (MOX) Lead Test Assemblies at the Catawba Nuclear Station. The Subcommittee will hear presentations by and hold discussions with representatives of the NRC staff, Duke Power, Framatome, and other interested persons regarding these matters. The Subcommittee will gather information, analyze relevant issues and facts, and formulate proposed positions and actions, as appropriate, for deliberation by the full Committee.

Members of the public desiring to provide oral statements and/or written comments should notify the Designated Federal Official, Mr. Ralph Caruso (telephone 301-415-8065) five days prior to the meeting, if possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Electronic recordings will be permitted only during those portions of the meeting that are open to the public.

Further information regarding this meeting can be obtained by contacting the Designated Federal Official between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (ET). Persons planning to attend this meeting are urged to contact the above named individual at least two working days prior to the meeting to be advised of any potential changes to the agenda.

Dated: April 2, 2004.

**Michael R. Snodderly,**

*Acting Associate Director for Technical Support, ACRS/ACNW.*

[FR Doc. 04-8044 Filed 4-8-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

## **NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

### **Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Subcommittee Meeting on Fire Protection; Notice of Meeting**

The ACRS Subcommittee on Fire Protection will hold a meeting on April 23, 2004, Room T-2B3, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

The entire meeting will be open to public attendance.

The agenda for the subject meeting shall be as follows: *Friday, April 23, 2004—8:30 a.m. until the conclusion of business.*