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NRC DOCKETS YUCCA MOUNTAIN APPLICATION, ADOPTS DOE'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has formally docketed the Department of Energy's license application for the proposed high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nev. The agency staff has also recommended that the Commission adopt, with further supplementation, DOE's Environmental Impact Statement for the repository project.

The decision to docket the application follows the NRC staff's determination that the application, submitted June 3, is sufficiently complete for the staff to begin its full technical review. Docketing the application does not indicate whether the Commission will approve or reject the construction authorization for the repository, nor does it preclude the Commission or the agency staff from requesting additional information from DOE during the course of its comprehensive technical review.

Docketing the application triggers a three-year deadline, with a possible one-year extension, set by Congress for the NRC to decide whether to grant a construction authorization. NRC officials have stated that meeting this deadline is contingent on the agency receiving sufficient resources from Congress.

After reviewing DOE's Environmental Impact Statement and its supplements, the NRC staff determined that it would be practicable for the agency to adopt the DOE report. However, the staff is requesting that DOE supplement some aspects of its groundwater analyses. The staff's report on its adoption review will be available on the NRC's ADAMS online document system at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> using access number ML08XXXXX.

The NRC notified DOE of its docketing decision and adoption recommendation this morning. A notice of docketing will be published soon in the Federal Register. A subsequent Federal Register notice will provide an opportunity for interested parties to seek an adjudicatory hearing before the NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board regarding the NRC's adoption of the Environmental Impact Statement or the substance of the license application.

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By Brad Bugger