Press Advisory – Wed., Nov. 12 Hearing

Rockville, MD - - FENOC Davis-Besse Atomic Reactor's Cracking Concrete Containment Challenged

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Environmental coalition to challenge the problem-plagued FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company's (FENOC) Davis-Besse atomic reactor's proposed 20-year license extension this Wednesday morning.

The focus of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) hearing will be the accelerated cracking of the concrete containment at Davis-Besse. Please phone in for the Davis-Besse November 12th Oral Argument (listen-only) at 888-790-4078. When prompted, please enter the passcode 2475418. The argument will start promptly at 9:00 AM Eastern Time. The NRC suggests being on the line at least five minutes early to work through any technical issues. (Sachin Desai, NRC ASLB law clerk, asks that reporters reach out to him in advance, so that he can keep an accurate count, and answer any questions: Sachin.Desai@nrc.gov | 301-415-6523)

Background:
The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel (ASLBP) overseeing FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company’s (FENOC) application proceeding for a 20-year license extension at its problem-plagued Davis-Besse atomic reactor in Oak Harbor, OH on the Lake Erie shore has announced oral argument pre-hearings will be held at NRC HQ in Rockville, Maryland on Wed., Nov. 12th, beginning promptly at 9 AM Eastern. The hearing will focus on the environmental coalition's latest concrete containment cracking contention, motivated by recent revelations of "ice-wedging crack propagation," despite earlier assurances by FENOC -- backed by NRC staff -- that the already severe cracking could not possibly get worse.

FENOC's contractor, Performance Improvement International, has reported that ice-wedging crack propagation can cause around a half-inch, or more, of crack growth every single time it freezes at the Davis-Besse site. Given the large number of freeze/thaw cycles per year, this can cause more than 10 inches of crack growth annually.

The oral argument will be held at the NRC's Headquarters in the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards Meeting Room 2 (Room #2B1), which is on the second floor of Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852. All persons
participating in person should arrive at the NRC at least 30 minutes early so as to allow sufficient time to pass through security screening and be escorted to the hearing room. NRC HQ is located immediately across the street from the White Flint Metro Station on the Red Line.

The environmental coalition intervening against Davis-Besse's 2017-2037 license extension includes Beyond Nuclear, Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario, Don't Waste Michigan, and the Green Party of Ohio. The coalition is represented by Terry Lodge, an attorney based in Toledo. The coalition launched its intervention nearly four years ago, on December 27, 2010. The coalition has raised numerous concrete containment cracking contentions since the severe -- and now admittedly worsening -- problem was first revealed in late 2011. Many of the cracking concerns raised by the environmental intervenors in 2012 have now recently been admitted to by FENOC itself.

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