



Opening Remarks for the New Processing Facility

Day 1 Licence Renewal Hearing

August 18, 2005

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AECL

Slide 1: Title

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the Commission, and thank you for the opportunity to make some introductory remarks associated with our licence renewal application for the New Processing Facility. For the record, I am Dave Torgerson, Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer for AECL.



Slide 2: Introduction

I would like to reiterate to the Commission that AECL and its employees are committed to completing the Dedicated Isotope Facilities. We have strengthened our team and senior management oversight to ensure safe and high quality operation. We are focused on meeting all criteria related to health, safety, security, the environment, and Canada's international obligations. And, we are committed to resolving technical issues, completing active commissioning and processing isotope targets during this next license period.

I will now turn our presentation over to Dr. Ken Hedges. Thank you.



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Vice President, Dedicated Isotope Facilities**

Slide 3: Dedicated Isotope Facilities

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the Commission. For the record, I am Ken Hedges, Vice President, Dedicated Isotope Facilities.

The Dedicated Isotope Facilities consists of the MAPLE 1 and MAPLE 2 reactors and the New Processing Facility.

Slide 4: Presentation Outline

I am pleased to update the Commission on:

- The measures we have taken to strengthen our team and senior management oversight;
- The progress we have made on the performance improvement plan;



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- The performance of the New Processing Facility during the current licence period; and
 - The plan for commissioning and operation during the next 2-year licence period.

Slide 5: Senior Management Oversight

As mentioned this morning during the MAPLE presentation, the Dedicated Isotope Facilities organization manages all aspects of the DIF Operations and the remaining project design and commissioning work.

Paul Lafrenière, the DIF General Manager, is responsible for ensuring completion of all operations-related activities in full compliance with AECL Nuclear Operations and CNSC requirements.

Reporting to Paul Lafrenière is the DIF Production Manager (MAPLE, NPF Facility Authority), who has the combined responsibility for the NPF and MAPLE reactors. This ensures a consistent approach for the safe operation and maintenance in compliance with all applicable licences, permits, laws and regulations, policies and procedures.



The new Project Engineering, Procurement and Commissioning team, which supports completion of commissioning and progress to In-Service, was described in the presentation this morning. Within this team, a new DIF Commissioning Manager has been appointed to ensure that the NPF meets both its design intent, and all safety and commissioning completion assurance requirements.

Slide 6: Senior Management Oversight (cont'd)

Operations management and processes for NPF have been consolidated with MAPLE through the appointment of a new DIF Facility Manager. The DIF Facility Manager is responsible for the safe and effective operation of the NPF and the MAPLE reactors within the applicable Operational Limits and Conditions.

The NPF staffing has been increased to improve the Operations staff performance. For example, 14 new employees have been added to support Hot Cell operations and four new NPF Shift Supervisors are being recruited.



The strengthened facility management oversight and operational risk review processes for MAPLE are also being applied to NPF. This broad review of the planning and implementation of all work and operations ensures management oversight and operational risk review in an integrated manner. This integrated team ensures that safety and quality practices are consistently enforced.

Slide 7: Safe and High Quality Operation

We are committed to operating the New Processing Facility to ensure safe, reliable and environmentally-sound performance. The strategy adopted by DIF Operations for upgrading the overall performance of the MAPLE reactors, people, procedures and processes is also applied to the NPF. Details of this strategy were presented this morning during the MAPLE presentation.

We have responded to lessons learned from the unplanned events during the current licence period. The same steps taken to improve operating performance of the MAPLE reactors are also applied to the NPF.



As part of our continuous improvement process we have enhanced our public consultation activities. Updates to the AECL website to improve public access to information on NPF are in progress. Regular meetings are held with CNSC staff in regards to NPF issues and progress.

We have regular communications with all AECL staff involved with the DIF Organization, where we discuss the importance of safe and reliable operation of the Dedicated Isotope Facilities.

Slide 8: NPF Performance

Because there was no radioactivity other than fixed sources used in the NPF, there were no airborne or liquid radioactive releases from NPF during the current licence period, and worker doses are small.

There have been no fires in NPF, and annual third party reviews have been conducted to verify compliance with the inspection requirements of the National Fire Code and the inspection and audit requirements of National Fire Protection Association Standard NFPA 801.



No lost-time injuries occurred in NPF during the current licence period.

Slide 9: NPF Performance (cont'd)

For the MAPLE reactors, the CNSC staff rated the AECL programs and their implementation in seven Safety Areas. In the presentation heard this morning, we commented on the work to improve our performance in the implementation aspects of Operating Performance and Performance Assurance for the MAPLE reactors. The applicable improvements will be implemented in the NPF.

To improve our performance in event reporting in NPF, we will implement the same procedure as used for the MAPLE reactors. To complete the implementation of the event reporting procedure, the OLC document for NPF will be revised.



Slide 10: NPF Performance (cont'd)

The NPF Operations and project staff are currently resolving issues found during the non-nuclear commissioning and the NPF Inactive Integrated Testing work. Work continues on operational readiness for the start of active commissioning.

During the current licence period:

- A number of the performance issues associated with the waste management systems have been resolved. An extensive new test campaign has been defined by the designer of the waste management systems. This test campaign will be conducted during the next few months to further evaluate the production performance for the systems.
- A permanent connection from the Closed Loop Cooling System to the Fire Water System is being made to facilitate access to back up cooling.
- A small diesel generator to provide backup power for the Closed Loop Cooling System and the Uninterruptible Power Supply has been installed. Commissioning of the small diesel generator will be performed after approval is obtained from the CNSC staff.



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- The Hazard and Operability studies for the NPF have been updated to reflect the as-built status of the facility as of the Spring of 2005. The results of the HAZOP studies are being used to ensure a robust design and safe operation on the NPF. The recommendations are being reviewed to define a plan for implementing improvements.

Slide 11: Operating Plan for Next Licence Period

At this time, DIF Operations and the Project team are completing all the operational readiness work and approvals prior to resuming active commissioning. For the active commissioning of the NPF we plan to operate the MAPLE 1 reactor to provide irradiated targets.

The next steps in the operating plan for the NPF are:

- Complete Phase B (Active) Commissioning using irradiated targets from MAPLE 1 reactor;
- Progress to In-Service.

Slide 12: Summary



In summary, Madame Chair, Members of the Commission, I believe that the remaining issues are being appropriately managed and are on the way to being resolved.

We have strengthened our team and senior management oversight. We have established, and are committed to, a comprehensive improvement program that supports safe, high quality operation, and draws on the lessons learnt by others in the industry. We are focused on meeting all regulatory criteria related to health, safety, security, the environment, and Canada's international obligations. And we are committed to resolving technical issues, completing active commissioning, and processing isotope targets during this next licence period.

Our plan is to process irradiated targets from the MAPLE 1 reactor. Our operating plan for the next 2 years will allow us to complete the commissioning of the NPF and establish safe reliable operation.

This ends my presentation in support of AECL's application for a two-year licence for the New Processing Facility.