

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, DC 20555  
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234  
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

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### **NRC AMENDS LICENSING, INSPECTION AND ANNUAL FEES**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its licensing, inspection and annual fees.

The amendments implement the requirements of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 which mandates that the NRC recover approximately 100 percent of its budget authority -- less appropriations from the Nuclear Waste Fund -- in fiscal years 1990 through 1998 by assessing fees.

The Commission's budget authority for fiscal year 1998 is \$472.8 million, of which \$15 million has been appropriated from the Nuclear Waste Fund. In addition, \$3 million has been appropriated for NRC's activities related to commercial vitrification of waste stored at the Department of Energy's Hanford, Washington, site and the pilot program for the external regulation of the Department of Energy. Funding for these activities is excluded from license fee revenues by law. This leaves a budget of \$454.8 million which NRC must collect in fees. The total amount to be recovered is approximately \$7.5 million less than that recovered the previous fiscal year.

The number of licensees paying annual fees has decreased. The Zion nuclear power station, in Illinois, ceased operating this year, while the Haddam Neck (Connecticut), Maine Yankee, (Maine), and Big Rock Point (Michigan), plants all ceased operating last year.

As a result of the decrease in both the budget and the number of licensees, the fiscal year 1998 annual fees are about the same as those for fiscal year 1997. Fees for fiscal year 1998 decrease by about 0.1 percent.

The 1998 annual fees are:

- \$2,976,000 for power reactor licensees, from \$2,978,000 in fiscal year 1997;
- \$57,300 for nonpower (research and test) reactor licensees, from approximately the same amount in fiscal year 1997;

- \$2,604,000 for high-enriched uranium fuel facility licensees, from \$2,606,000 in fiscal year 1997;
- \$1,278,000 for low-enriched fuel fabrication facility licensees which manufacture fuel for nuclear power plants, from \$1,279,000 in fiscal year 1997;
- \$14,000 for radiographers, from \$14,100 in fiscal year 1997.

The amount from fiscal year 1997 remains unchanged for broad scope medical licensees, who are charged \$23,500.

The Commission's amendments include a decrease in hourly inspection and licensing rates, adjustments in rates for license reviews, full cost recovery for resident inspectors, and charges for overtime.

The NRC is also planning to examine the current annual fee exemption policy for licensees undergoing decommissioning or holding possession-only licenses. Currently, licensees decommissioning their facilities who store their spent fuel in a spent fuel pool are not assessed an annual fee. But licensees who store spent fuel in an independent spent fuel storage installation, must pay such a fee. The NRC is also examining the distribution between 10 CFR Part 170 licensing and inspection fees and annual fees. Any changes to these policies would be included in the fee rule for the next fiscal year.

The final rule will be available in the Federal Register, and published on the Internet at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>

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