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NRC Approves Changes to Palisades Nuclear Plant's Emergency Planning Requirements

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has granted Holtec Decommissioning International's request to revise the emergency preparedness plan for the Palisades Nuclear Plant in Covert, Michigan, to reflect the plant's decommissioning status.

Holtec has publicly announced its intention to restart operations at the facility. If the NRC reauthorizes power operations at Palisades, a condition in this approval requires the plant to revert to the emergency preparedness requirements for an operating reactor.

The approved exemptions were needed for Holtec to establish and maintain an adequate level of radiological emergency preparedness during decommissioning. These exemptions are consistent with NRC actions at other decommissioning plants. Once Holtec implements the changes, state and local governments may rely on a comprehensive emergency management plan approach ("all hazards") for offsite emergency response, should an event occur at the Palisades site. A 10-mile emergency planning zone will no longer be required. Holtec must continue to maintain an onsite emergency plan and response capabilities at Palisades, including the continued notification of state government officials in the event of an emergency declaration.

After a nuclear power plant has permanently ceased operations and removed fuel from the reactor vessel, the risk of an offsite radiological release is significantly lower, and the types of possible accidents significantly fewer, than at an operating reactor. The NRC staff evaluated and confirmed analyses in Holtec's request and considered comments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Based on the [NRC staff's evaluation and recommendation](#), the Commission [approved the exemptions](#) on Dec. 7. The exemptions and associated license amendments reflecting the changes will be issued in the next few weeks.

The Palisades Nuclear Plant, located 5 miles south of South Haven, Michigan, was a pressurized water reactor that began operations in 1971 and shut down in May 2022. Holtec has applied for a separate exemption from NRC regulations that, if approved, would allow it to continue to pursue plans for a restart. Several other regulatory actions would be required for the facility to resume operations.