

No. 93-92
Tel. 301/504-2240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Thursday, July 1, 1993)

NRC PROPOSES TO AMEND REGULATION ON NOTIFICATIONS
REGARDING FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT OF SPENT FUEL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is proposing to amend its regulation dealing with notifications to the NRC regarding funding and management plans for spent fuel by utility licensees which shutdown nuclear power reactors before the expected end of their operating life.

Currently utility licensees are required to make these notifications to the NRC no later than five years before an operating license expires, regardless of the operating status of the facility. The proposed rule would require licensees to make the notifications within two years of after permanently ceasing operations at a licensed nuclear power reactor or no later than five years before the operating license expires, whichever event occurs first.

The proposed change would make the requirement consistent with the requirement that licensees owning prematurely shutdown nuclear power plants submit decommissioning plans to the NRC within two years of ceasing operations. Decommissioning plans must take into account such factors as the unavailability of a disposal facility for spent fuel and other site specific factors affecting the licensees's capability to carry out decommissioning safely.

The proposed change also reflects the changed circumstances since the decommissioning regulations become effective in 1988. At that time, the premature closing of nuclear power plants was not expected to be very likely and the Department of Energy planned to have a repository for the disposal of spent fuel in operation by 1998. Now, the number of nuclear power plants closed prematurely has increased over previous expectations and the Department of Energy has delayed the opening of a repository until at least 2010.

Written comments on the proposed amendment to Part 50 of the Commission's regulations should be received by September 13. They should be addressed to the Secretary of the Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D. C. 20555, Attention: Docketing and Service Branch.

#