

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

No. 95-137

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Thursday, November 9, 1995)

NRC AUTHORIZES LOW-POWER TESTING
OF WATTS BAR 1 REACTOR

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation issued a license today to Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) authorizing the loading of fuel and low-power testing of Unit 1 of the Watts Bar Nuclear Power Plant near Spring City, Tennessee.

The operating license was issued after extensive NRC inspections verified that Watts Bar Unit 1 construction was complete and met all safety and environmental regulatory requirements, and TVA's operational readiness was adequate for low-power operation.

Approval of a full-power operating license for the facility will require approval by the Commission once fuel loading and low-power testing have been completed.

Unit 1 was nearly complete in 1985, but a number of deficiencies were identified by TVA employees and confirmed in NRC inspections. As a result, TVA withdrew its certification that Watts Bar Unit 1 was ready to load fuel.

Because of the extended period of time since publication of the NRC's Final Environmental Statement in 1978, the staff published a supplement to it this April. In that document, which incorporated public comments, the staff concluded that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with operation of the plant.

TVA has not yet decided whether to complete Watts Bar Unit 2. Each of the pressurized water reactors is designed to produce 1,160 megawatts of electrical power.

####