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NRC AMENDS LICENSING,  
INSPECTION, AND ANNUAL FEES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending the licensing, inspection, and annual fees charged to its license applicants and licensees.

The amendments implement the requirements of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 which mandates that the NRC recover nearly 100 percent of its budget authority -- less appropriations from the Nuclear Waste Fund -- by assessing license and annual fees.

The Commission's budget authority for fiscal year 1997 is \$476.8 million, of which about \$11 million has been appropriated from the Nuclear Waste Fund, and \$3.5 million from the General Fund, for activities related to commercial vitrification of waste stored at the Department of Energy's Hanford, Washington site. Both activities are excluded from licensee fee revenues by law. This leaves a budget of approximately \$462.3 million which NRC must collect in fees. The apportionment among licensing and inspection fees and annual fees has changed.

The proposed amendments were published for comment in the Federal Register on February 27. The annual fees have increased slightly since then, because the fees for services are slightly lower than anticipated.

The 1997 annual fees are:

-- \$2,978,000 for power reactor licensees, from \$2,746,000 in fiscal year 1996;

-- \$57,300 for nonpower (research and test) reactor licensees, from \$52,800 in fiscal year 1996;

-- \$2,606,000 for high-enriched uranium fuel facility licensees, from \$2,403,000 in fiscal year 1996;

-- \$1,279,000 for low-enriched fuel fabrication facility licensees which manufacture fuel for nuclear power plants, from \$1,179,000 in fiscal year 1996;

-- \$14,100 for radiographers, from \$13,000; and

-- \$23,500 for broad scope medical licensees, from \$21,700.

The Commission's amendments also include revisions to hourly rates charged for the reactor and nuclear materials programs, as well as revisions to licensing application and amendment fees to reflect the agency's cost of reviewing these documents.

The amendments to Parts 170 and 171 of the Commission's regulations will be published in the Federal Register.