

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. 97-076

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Monday, May 12, 1997)

NRC CERTIFIES GE NUCLEAR ENERGY'S
ADVANCED BOILING WATER REACTOR DESIGN

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its regulations to certify the U.S. Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (ABWR) design developed by GE Nuclear Energy. The certification is the first to be issued under the NRC's new licensing process for standard design certification and will be valid for 15 years.

A utility that wishes to build and operate a new nuclear power plant may choose to use the certified ABWR design and reference it in an application for a license. Safety issues within the scope of the certified design will not be subject to litigation, although site-specific environmental impacts associated with building and operating the plant at a particular location will be litigable.

Future applicants for a license could make plant-specific changes to portions of the U.S. ABWR design by following the procedures set out in the design certification rule. The applicant or licensee would be required to maintain records of all such changes until the license is terminated.

No application for a license using the U.S. ABWR standard design has been filed with the NRC, and issuance of this regulation does not authorize construction of any specific new nuclear power plant.

The NRC published a proposed rule on this subject in the Federal Register on April 7, 1995, for public comment and held public meetings to explain the proposal on May 11 and December 4 of that year. The agency also offered an opportunity to request a hearing on the proposed certification of the U.S. ABWR design. No requests were received.

Responses to the comments received are discussed in the Federal Register notice on the final rule published today.

#