

5.0 No-Action Decommissioning Alternative

The action discussed in this Supplement and in the *Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Decommissioning of Nuclear Facilities* (1988 GEIS; NRC 1988) is decommissioning. The only alternative to the action of decommissioning is not to decommission the facility. The option to restart the reactor is not considered to be an alternative to decommissioning because the regulations do not allow the licensee to reload fuel and restart the facility after submitting a certification that the fuel has been removed from the reactor vessel.

The alternative to decommissioning at the end of the licensing period is a "no action" alternative, implying that a licensee would simply abandon or leave a facility after ceasing operations. Once the facility permanently ceases operation, if the licensee does not conduct decommissioning activities to an extent that meets the license termination criteria in 10 CFR 20 Subpart E, then the license will not be terminated (although the licensee will not be authorized to operate the reactor). The licensee will be required to comply with the necessary requirements for the operating license. As a result, the environmental impacts for maintaining the nuclear reactor facility will be considered to be in the bounds of the appropriate, previously issued Environmental Impact Statements.

The objective of decommissioning is to restore a radiologically contaminated facility to a condition such that there is no unreasonable risk from the decommissioned facility to the public health and safety. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations do not allow the option of not decommissioning. Under NRC regulations, the original operating license for a nuclear power plant is issued for up to 40 years. The license may be renewed for additional 20-year periods if NRC requirements are met. However, at the end of the term of the license (whether it has been extended or not), the regulations require that the facility be decommissioned.

5.1 Reference

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). 1988. *Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Decommissioning of Nuclear Facilities*. NUREG-0586, NRC, Washington, D.C.