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NRC, DOE GIVE CONGRESS LICENSING STRATEGY FOR NEXT-GENERATION NUCLEAR PLANT

WASHINGTON –The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today delivered to Congress the Next Generation Nuclear Plant (NGNP) Licensing Strategy Report.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 directed the agencies to jointly develop a strategy for licensing the NGNP demonstration plant. The report to Congress explains that current NRC requirements for light-water reactors need to be adapted for the advanced non-light-water reactor designs DOE is considering under the NGNP initiative. The report also describes the analytical tools, research and development activities and estimated resources necessary to complete an NRC licensing review by 2017, which would allow DOE to build and begin operating the plant by 2021.

“The NRC’s new reactor licensing process is currently focused on light-water reactors, and the staff is confident this basic framework can also support an NGNP review,” said NRC Chairman Dale Klein. “We will work with DOE to supplement that framework with NGNP-specific items.”

The report outlines DOE’s conclusion that the NGNP would be a very-high-temperature gas-cooled reactor that could produce electricity, as well as process heat and hydrogen. The NGNP supports President Bush’s Advanced Energy Initiative, which advocates new investments and nuclear power policies to increase our nation’s energy security.

“DOE is committed to the development and commercial deployment of NGNP technology in a timely manner,” said DOE Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Dennis Spurgeon. “Nuclear energy is vital to our nation’s energy security and the NGNP has the potential to extend the benefits to bring nuclear technology to a whole new sector of the U.S. economy.”

The joint Licensing Strategy Report will be available on the DOE's Office of Nuclear Energy Web site at: <http://www.nuclear.gov> .

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