



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**
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FOR THE RECORD

“Small” Reactor Reviews

There has been much media attention and speculation about the development of small reactors for use in applications other than large-scale power generation. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has yet to receive any applications for such reactors. When, or if, formal applications are received, they will be subject to a very rigorous review process that will take several years to complete. And submission of an application is no guarantee that the NRC – whose mission is to protect people and the environment – will find any particular design meets the agency’s high safety and security standards.

The NRC is aware that Hyperion and others have proposed building such reactors. Hyperion has advised the NRC it intends to provide technical reports on its proposal in the fall of 2009 as part of a pre-application review. That is only the first step in a process that could take years and years. The licensing of new, small reactors is not just around the corner. The NRC’s attention and resources now are focused on the large-scale reactors being proposed to serve millions of Americans, rather than smaller devices with both limited power production and possible industrial process applications.

In our innovative society it is not unusual for firms like Hyperion and others to propose reactor designs that are radically different from the existing generation of technology. And examining proposals for radically different technology will likely require an exhaustive review before the NRC could approve them as safe for use. Until such time as there is a formal proposal, the NRC will, as directed by Congress, continue to devote the majority of its resources to addressing the current technology base.