



NRC NEWS

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NRC RENEWS LICENSE OF AREVA NUCLEAR FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY IN RICHLAND, WASH., FOR 40 MORE YEARS OF OPERATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has renewed the operating license of Areva NP's nuclear fuel fabrication facility in Richland, Wash., for an additional 40 years of operation. This is the first 40-year renewal of a nuclear facility license in the United States.

The Areva facility is licensed to possess and process uranium enriched to a maximum of 5 percent by weight in the isotope U₂₃₅ for the manufacture of fuel assemblies for commercial nuclear power plants.

The license terms for fuel fabrication facilities are not specified in legislation or NRC regulations. Previously, the NRC had licensed fuel fabrication facilities for maximum terms of 20 years. In 2006, the Commission authorized extending the maximum license term to 40 years. Actual license terms depend on the facility, its safety programs and procedures, and its aging management program.

Areva submitted its application to renew the license on Oct. 24, 2006. The NRC published a notice of opportunity to request a hearing March 15, 2007; no hearing requests were filed. An Environmental Assessment and finding of no significant impact was issued April 3, 2009.

The staff's safety review examined Areva's programs for criticality safety, fire safety, chemical safety, security and emergency planning. A public version of the staff's Safety Evaluation Report on the Areva license renewal is available through the NRC's ADAMS online document management system, by entering accession number ML090760702 at this Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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