



NRC NEWS

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NRC INFORMS WESTINGHOUSE OF SAFETY ISSUES WITH AP1000 SHIELD BUILDING

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has informed Westinghouse that the company has not demonstrated that certain structural components of the revised AP1000 shield building can withstand design basis loads. An NRC letter to Westinghouse states that progress on the shield building review will require the company to provide modifications to the design, as well as testing that demonstrates the building will perform its intended safety function under design basis loads. The staff will continue its review of the remainder of the AP1000 design certification amendment application.

As the name implies, the AP1000 shield building would protect the reactor's primary containment from severe weather and other events. The building's other functions would include providing a radiation barrier during normal operation and supporting an emergency cooling water tank.

"We've been talking to Westinghouse regularly about the shield building since October 2008, and we've consistently laid out our questions to the company," said Michael Johnson, director of the NRC's Office of New Reactors. "This is a situation where fundamental engineering standards will have to be met before we can begin determining whether the shield building meets the agency's requirements."

The impact on the overall AP1000 certification review schedule will be established after the staff and Westinghouse discuss the company's plans to address the NRC's conclusions regarding the shield building design. The impact on related review schedules for Combined License applications referencing the AP1000 will be addressed once the design certification review schedule is better understood.

The staff's letter to Westinghouse will be available on the NRC's electronic documents database, ADAMS, by entering ML092320205 at this address:
<http://adamswebsearch.nrc.gov/dologin.htm>.

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