



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC APPROVES CO-60 PILOT PROGRAM AT CLINTON

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has approved a license amendment request from Exelon for a pilot program to explore the production of Cobalt-60 at the Clinton Nuclear Power Station, located about six miles east of Clinton, Ill.

The amended Clinton license gives Exelon permission to generate and transfer Cobalt-60 under the NRC's regulations for "byproduct" material. Cobalt-60 is a radioactive material licensed by the NRC for applications such as commercial irradiators and cancer treatment.

The amended license allows Exelon to alter the reactor's core by inserting up to eight modified fuel assemblies containing rods filled with Cobalt-59, which would absorb neutrons during reactor operation and become Cobalt-60. The pilot program will provide data on how the modified assemblies perform during reactor operation. Exelon has informed the NRC it plans to insert the modified assemblies during Clinton's current refueling outage.

The NRC staff approved the amendment after evaluating the potential effects of the modified fuel assemblies on plant operation and accident scenarios. The staff concluded the modified core will continue to meet the agency's safety requirements.

The agency issued a *Federal Register* notice on Dec. 14, 2009, (<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-29672.pdf>) offering an opportunity to request a hearing on the license amendment request. Petitions must be filed by Feb. 12, 2010, by anyone whose interest may be affected by the license amendment and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding. The notice includes detailed instructions for requesting a hearing through the NRC's E-filing system's electronic submittal page at <http://www.nrc.gov/site-help/e-submittals.html>. For specific guidance and instructions on public involvement in hearings visit link at: <http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/adjudicatory/hearing.html>.

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