NRC NEWS

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NRC APPROVES RULE TO CERTIFY AMENDED AP1000 REACTOR DESIGN

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has voted to approve a rule certifying an amended version of Westinghouse's AP1000 reactor design for use in the United States. The amended certification, which will be incorporated into the NRC's regulations, will be valid for 15 years.

"The Commission is able to reach this final step in approving the amended AP1000 reactor design due to the staff's dedicated work ensuring the design meets NRC's safety requirements," said NRC Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko. "The design provides enhanced safety margins through use of simplified, inherent, passive, or other innovative safety and security functions, and also has been assessed to ensure it could withstand damage from an aircraft impact without significant release of radioactive materials."

The Commission has also found good cause to make the rule immediately effective once it is published in the *Federal Register*; the rule is expected to be published within seven business days. NRC rules normally become effective 30 days after publication. The *Federal Register* notice and the Commission's directions to the staff on publishing the approved rule will include a discussion on the good cause finding.

The design certification process provides for public participation and early resolution of safety issues for proposed reactor designs. NRC certification, in the form of a final rule, means the design meets the agency's applicable safety requirements. If an applicant for a nuclear power plant license references a certified design, the applicant need not submit safety information for the design. Instead, the license application and the NRC's safety review would address the remaining safety issues specific to the proposed nuclear power plant.

The AP1000 is a 1,100 megawatt electric pressurized-water reactor that includes passive safety features that would cool down the reactor after an accident without the need for human intervention. Westinghouse submitted an application for certification of the original AP1000 standard plant design on March 28, 2002; the NRC issued a rule certifying that design on Jan. 27, 2006.

Westinghouse submitted an application to amend the AP1000 on May 27, 2007. The NRC's extensive technical review of the amendment request focused on ensuring the agency's

safety requirements have been met. This transparent process, including input from the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, led to the NRC issuing a final safety evaluation report on the amended AP1000 in August. The NRC issued a proposed rule for the amended design in January. Stakeholders provided more than 12,000 comments on the proposed rule; the NRC staff considered these comments in developing the final rule.

The NRC is currently reviewing six Combined License applications that reference the amended AP1000 design. The NRC has certified three other standard reactor designs: the Advanced Boiling Water Reactor, System 80+, and AP600. The agency is currently reviewing applications to certify the Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor, the U.S. Advanced Pressurized Water Reactor and the EPR pressurized-water reactor.

More information about the amended AP1000 design review can be found on the NRC's website at: http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/design-cert/amended-ap1000.html .

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