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NRC Issues Final Environmental Impact Statement For Watts Bar Unit 2 Operating License

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has concluded there are no environmental impacts that would preclude issuing an operating license for the under-construction Watts Bar 2 reactor near Spring City, Tenn. The NRC's conclusions are laid out in Supplement 2 to the Watts Bar 2 Final Environmental Statement.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) began Watts Bar 2's operating license application in 1976, when the NRC's reactor licensing process involved first applying for a construction permit and then a license. TVA obtained construction permits for two Watts Bar reactors in 1973, with Unit 1 completing the licensing process and starting operations in 1996. TVA halted construction of Unit 2 in late 1985, and then informed the NRC in Aug. 2007 that it would resume construction of Unit 2. TVA is requesting permission to operate Unit 2, a 1,150-megawatt electric, Westinghouse-designed pressurized-water reactor of the same type as Unit 1. The Watts Bar site is approximately 50 miles northeast of Chattanooga, Tenn.

TVA, which operates under many of the requirements of a U.S. government agency, issued its own Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Unit 2 in February 2008 and updated its operating license application on March 4, 2009. The NRC is required to do its own environmental review and held meetings near the plant in October 2009 to gather the community's comments before issuing its draft conclusions in October 2011. The staff held additional meetings in December 2011 for the public to comment on the draft report. The NRC also sought input from federal, state, tribal, regional and local agencies during the review.

The NRC continues its safety review of the license application, and the agency expects to update its Final Safety Evaluation Report on Unit 2 in May 2014. The NRC must complete both the safety and environmental reviews before reaching a decision on whether TVA can begin operating Watts Bar Unit 2.

The supplement is available on the agency's [website](#), as well as the NRC's electronic document database, ADAMS, under accession number [ML13144A202](#). In addition, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, at 1001 Broad St. in Chattanooga, Tenn., will have a hardbound copy of the supplement available for public inspection.