

**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**[NRC-2014-0256]**

**Aquatic Environmental Studies for Nuclear Power Stations**

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Draft regulatory guide; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing for public comment draft regulatory guide (DG), DG-4023, "Aquatic Environmental Studies for Nuclear Power Stations." This DG provides technical guidance for aquatic environmental studies and analyses supporting decisions related to nuclear power stations by NRC regarding major Federal actions and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

**DATES:** Submit comments by **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]**. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date. Although a time limit is given, comments and suggestions in connection with items for inclusion in guides currently being developed or improvements in all published guides are encouraged at any time.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by any of the following methods (unless this document describes a different method for submitting comments on a specified subject):

- **Federal Rulemaking Web site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2014-0256. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-287-3422; e-mail: [Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov](mailto:Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual(s) listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document.

- **Mail comments to:** Cindy Bladey, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: 3WFN 06A-A44M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

For additional direction on accessing information and submitting comments, see “Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments” in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ryan Whited, Office of New Reactors, telephone: 301-415-1154, e-mail: [Ryan.Whited@nrc.gov](mailto:Ryan.Whited@nrc.gov) and Edward O’Donnell, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, telephone: 301-251-7455, e-mail: [Edward.ODonnell@nrc.gov](mailto:Edward.ODonnell@nrc.gov). Both are staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-000

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments.**

#### **A. Obtaining Information.**

Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2014-0256 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may obtain publicly-available information related to this document, by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web Site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2014-0256. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-287-3422; e-mail: [Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov](mailto:Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual(s) listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document.

- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may access publicly available documents online in the NRC Library at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "[ADAMS Public Documents](#)" and then select "[Begin Web-based ADAMS Search](#)." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov). The DG is electronically available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML13186A085.

- **NRC's PDR:** You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC's PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

## B. Submitting Comments.

Please include Docket ID NRC-2014-0256 in the subject line of your comment submission, in order to ensure that the NRC is able to make your comment submission available to the public in this docket.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information in comment submissions that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. The NRC posts all comment submissions at <http://www.regulations.gov> as well as entering the comment submissions into ADAMS. The NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the NRC, then you should inform those persons not to include identifying or contact information in their comment submissions that they do not want to be publicly disclosed. Your request should state that the NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment submissions into ADAMS.

## **II. Additional Information.**

The NRC is issuing for public comment a DG in the NRC's "Regulatory Guide" series. This series was developed to describe and make available to the public such information as methods that are acceptable to the NRC staff for implementing specific parts of the NRC's regulations, techniques that the staff uses in evaluating specific problems or postulated accidents, and data that the staff needs in its review of applications for permits and licenses.

The DG, entitled, "Aquatic Environmental Studies for Nuclear Power Stations," is a proposed new regulatory guide, and it is temporarily identified by its task number, DG-4023. The DG provides technical guidance for aquatic environmental studies and analyses supporting decisions related to nuclear power stations by NRC. For purposes of DG-4023, the term "aquatic" encompasses freshwater, estuarine, and marine environments. The DG addresses wetlands containing submerged aquatic vegetation but does not address wetlands also containing emergent vegetation. Instead, NRC's Regulatory Guide 4.11, "Terrestrial Environmental Studies for Nuclear Power Stations," addresses such wetland features, along with the terrestrial environment. Although the NRC is issuing separate regulatory guides addressing terrestrial and aquatic environmental studies, it recognizes that aquatic and terrestrial ecological issues often overlap and are often interrelated.

### **III. Backfitting and Issue Finality.**

Issuance of this DG, if finalized, would not constitute backfitting as defined in § 50.109 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) (the Backfit Rule) and would not otherwise be inconsistent with the issue finality provisions in 10 CFR part 52. As discussed in the “Implementation” section of this DG, the NRC has no current intention to impose this DG, if finalized, on holders of current operating licenses or combined licenses.

This DG, if finalized, may be applied to applications for construction permits, operating licenses, early site permits, combines licenses and limited work authorizations docketed by the NRC as of the date of issuance of the final regulatory guide, as well as future applications for construction permits, operating licenses, early site permits, combines licenses and limited work authorizations submitted after the issuance of the final regulatory guide. Such action would not constitute backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1) and would not be inconsistent with the applicable issue finality provision in 10 CFR part 52, inasmuch as such applicants or potential applicants are not within the scope of entities protected by the Backfit Rule or the relevant issue finality provisions in part 52.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2014.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Harriet Karagiannis, Acting Chief,  
Regulatory Guidance and Generic Issues Branch,  
Division of Engineering,  
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.