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Regulatory Improvements for Decommissioning Power Reactors

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Comment on FR Doc # 2015-29536

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General Comment

I am submitting comments on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commissions Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Docket No. NRC-2015-0070). I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the development of potential changes to the decommissioning process for nuclear power reactors.

First, I would like to respectfully request that NRC extend the comment period for the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) for an additional 45 days, until February 18, 2016. This will give stakeholders necessary additional time to draft and submit comments. The original comment deadline of January 4 is insufficient given the number of federal holidays that fall during the comment period.

Communities that host nuclear power reactors must be actively and substantially engaged in the decommissioning process from the outset. Host communities face many significant impacts upon reactor closure including orderly redevelopment of the site, direct and indirect economic impacts related to the loss of employee income and tax revenue, changes in emergency planning requirements and support, and other fiscal impacts related to a major shift in the local economy and employment.

I strongly support more direct engagement with host communities in the NRCs decommissioning and closure process. Section V of the ANPRM entitled Specific Considerations asks whether the current role of stakeholders in the decommissioning process should be expanded or enhanced, and how so?

-The response from communities that host nuclear facilities is a resounding yes.

-A way to expand host community engagement is through the establishment of a decommissioning task force made up of community members, to advise the NRC on community impacts before, during, and after reactor closure. While the ANPRM acknowledges that for most decommissioning sites, state and local governments are involved in an advisory capacity (as part of a Community Engagement Panel for instance), there is no requirement under current NRC regulations that these advisory panels be formed. As the NRC examines potential changes to current regulations, mandating these panels would be an appropriate step toward ensuring local community engagement.

Additionally, the costs to decommission and close nuclear power reactors must be borne by the utility, NOT passed off on the ratepayers once the utility no longer makes a profit from the plant. Corporate profits should not be placed before public safety. The utilities have a moral and ethical obligation to maintain safety and security of decommissioned nuclear reactors and the resulting radioactive waste for as long as it remains radioactive. The public should NOT bear the burden to clean up the mess made by utility corporations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commissions Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Regulatory Improvements for Decommissioning Power Reactors (Docket No. NRC-2015-0070).

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Mansfield-Wells