

Rulemaking1CEm Resource

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Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2016 1:32 PM
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TITLE: Regulatory Improvements for Decommissioning Power Reactors

COMMENT#: 031

From: Bennett, Galen [mailto:gbennett@ES-IL.ORG]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2016 9:47 AM
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Please see attached document.

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February 18, 2016

Secretary
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001
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ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff

VIA EMAIL

RE: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Docket ID NRC-2015-0070)

Dear Secretary,

Byron Fire Protection District (the "District") is a local governmental body with a vested interest in the future of Exelon Generation Company's ("Exelon") Byron Nuclear Generating Station ("Byron Station") located in Byron, Illinois. The impact of Byron Station within its host community is significant. Exelon is the predominant taxpayer in the District – representing approximately 76% of the District's equalized assessed value in tax year 2014. It is also the largest employer in the area – employing approximately 850 employees.

Byron Unit 1 was issued an initial operating license in 1985, which was renewed in 2015. Its current license is scheduled to expire in 2044. Byron Unit 2 was issued an initial operating license in 1987, which was renewed in 2015. Its current license is scheduled to expire in 2046. The District does not know whether Exelon will apply for Subsequent License Renewals for Byron Station.

This comment is being submitted in response to Section V of the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("ANPR") entitled "Specific Considerations," which asks whether the current role of the States, members of the public, or other stakeholders in the decommissioning process should be expanded or enhanced, and whether the NRC's regulations should mandate the formation of advisory panels. The District strongly supports an expanded role for State and local governmental bodies and NRC regulations to mandate the formation of advisory panels.

Should Exelon announce its intention to permanently close Byron Station at any point in time, it is only appropriate that the local governmental bodies have the opportunity to discuss the closure and decommissioning of the station and provide input regarding the impact such closure and decommissioning will have on the local governmental bodies and their constituents. Topics of discussion should include, in part, the timing of decommissioning, the owner and/or operator's continuing obligations to the local governmental bodies, and options for mitigating the impact of closure on the host community. These topics are of particular importance because it remains unknown when the spent fuel will be removed from the site. The severity of the potential impacts of closing the community's predominant taxpayer and largest employer necessitate an approach that incorporates such considerations.

As Section V of the ANPR acknowledges, State and local governmental bodies are often involved in an advisory capacity (as part of a community engagement panel, for example) for most decommissioning sites. The formation of such panels, however, is not currently required by NRC regulations. Given the significant impact of nuclear plant closure and decommissioning on host communities, the NRC regulations should mandate the formation of advisory panels that include State and local governmental bodies. It is the District's hope that such panels would foster communication and information exchange between the owners of nuclear power stations and local governmental bodies from the host communities in order to plan for and mitigate the impacts of decommissioning on the host communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Docket ID NRC-2015-0070.

Regards,

Galen Bennett
Chief Byron Fire Protection District