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NRC Amends Licensing, Inspection and Annual Fees for Fiscal Year 2017

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has amended its existing regulations to reflect the licensing, inspection, special project and annual fees it will charge applicants and licensees for fiscal year 2017. The amended regulations reduce annual fees for most licensees, primarily due to a decrease in the agency's budget.

The final fee rule, published June 30, in the *Federal Register*, includes fees required by law to recover approximately 90 percent of the agency's budget. A proposed rule was published Jan. 30 for public comment.

For FY 2017, the NRC received total budget authority of \$940.1 million, including \$23 million in prior year carryover funds. The carryover funds are not included in the calculation of fees for FY 2017.

The NRC's required fee recovery amount for FY 2017, after billing and collection adjustments, is \$805.9 million. Approximately 37 percent, or \$297.3 million, of the fees will recover the cost of specific services to applicants and licensees under 10 CFR Part 170. The remaining 63 percent, \$508.6 million, will be billed as annual fees to licensees under 10 CFR Part 171.

Annual fees for FY 2017 decrease by 7.5 percent over last year for operating reactors, 2 percent to 11 percent for most fuel facilities, less than 1 percent for research and test reactors, and 4.6 percent for spent fuel storage and reactor decommissioning licensees. Fees increase by 13 percent for U.S. Department of Energy uranium recovery activities, while other uranium recovery licensees remain flat.

For the final rule, the NRC has lowered the hourly rate of staff review time from \$265 to \$263 for FY 2017, and fees charged under 10 CFR Part 170 have been updated accordingly.

The NRC estimates the FY 2017 annual fees will be paid by licensees of 99 operating commercial power reactors, four research and test reactors, 122 spent nuclear fuel storage and decommissioning reactor facilities, nine fuel cycle facilities, 10 uranium recovery facilities and approximately 2,700 nuclear materials licensees.

The final rule implements several process improvements approved by the Commission in FY 2016 aimed at making the NRC's fees process more efficient and transparent. Of 14 process improvements, 10 have been fully implemented, with the remainder due to be completed by Sept. 30. More information on these process improvements is contained in the *Federal Register notice*.