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NRC Approves Changes to Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Planning Requirements

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has granted Exelon Generation Company's request to modify the emergency preparedness plan for the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station in Lacey Township, N.J., to reflect the plant's decommissioning status.

The changes include exemptions from specific NRC requirements that may not be applicable to a plant that has permanently ceased operations. Once the licensee implements the exemptions, state and local governments may rely on comprehensive emergency management ("all hazard") planning for off-site emergency response to events at Oyster Creek, rather than a dedicated offsite radiological emergency response plan. As a result, there will not be a 10-mile emergency planning zone identified in Oyster Creek's license. The plant will maintain an onsite emergency plan and response capabilities, including the continued notification of state government officials of an emergency declaration.

Exelon provided analyses to justify the exemptions showing that the risk of an offsite radiological release is significantly lower than an operating power reactor. Also, the types of possible accidents are significantly fewer at a nuclear power reactor that has permanently ceased operations and removed fuel from the reactor vessel.

The NRC staff evaluated and confirmed these analyses and, based on the [NRC staff's evaluation and recommendation](#), the Commission [approved the exemptions](#) July 17. The exemptions were granted and a [safety evaluation](#) issued Oct. 16, and [license amendments](#) reflecting the exemptions were issued Oct. 17. The exemptions will be published Oct. 22 in the *Federal Register*. Under the exemptions, Exelon may not implement the changes to its emergency preparedness plans until Sept. 17, 2019, based on the company's evaluation of applicable accidents.

Oyster Creek, a single boiling-water reactor, began operations in 1969. It ceased operations Sept. 17, 2018. All spent fuel has been permanently moved from the reactor vessel to the spent fuel pool for storage. The exemptions from specific emergency preparedness requirements are part of several changes to the plant's licensing basis and technical specifications the licensee requested to reflect Oyster Creek's decommissioning status.