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NRC Completes Safety Review of Early Site Permit for Clinch River Nuclear Site

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has completed its Final Safety Evaluation Report for an Early Site Permit application from Tennessee Valley Authority for the Clinch River Nuclear Site. The report concludes there are no safety aspects that would preclude issuing the permit for the site, approximately five miles southwest of Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The approximately 600-page [report](#) describes the agency's review of the application, and incorporates [comments](#) from the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. The NRC staff reviewed information on topics including:

- site seismology, geology, meteorology and hydrology;
- risks from potential accidents resulting from operation of a nuclear plant at the site; and
- the major features of the emergency plan TVA would implement if a reactor was built at the site.

The report also reviewed unique aspects of the application. These included requests for exemptions from some offsite emergency planning requirements, including the plume exposure pathway emergency planning zone, as well as a proposed plume exposure planning zone size methodology. A future reactor license applicant could use the sizing methodology to determine an appropriate planning zone for the application's specific reactor type.

The ESP process allows an applicant to address site-related issues, such as environmental impacts, for possible future construction and operation of a nuclear power plant at the site. TVA submitted the application on May 12, 2016. More information on the ESP [process](#) is available on the NRC website.

The staff will provide the report on the application to the Commission for a mandatory hearing on the permit later this year. The staff issued its [Environmental Impact Statement](#) on the application in April 2019. The Commission will conduct the hearing to determine whether the staff's review supports the findings necessary to issue the permit.