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NRC AUTHORIZES TOLEDO EDISON TO LOAD SPENT FUEL  
INTO DRY STORAGE CASKS AT DAVIS BESSE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will allow Toledo Edison Company to transfer spent fuel early next week from the fuel storage pool at its Davis Besse Nuclear Power Station in Oak Harbor, Ohio, to dry storage casks located in an independent storage facility on the plant site.

The NRC declined to grant a request from the Toledo Coalition for Safe Energy to halt the loading of the casks.

Toledo Edison previously informed the NRC that it needs to remove fuel assemblies from the pool, where fuel is stored under water, to free up space to receive fresh fuel and to unload the full reactor core during a refueling outage in April. The three storage casks to be used initially at Davis-Besse hold a total of 72 fuel assemblies.

The utility last week provided a report to the NRC on its preoperational testing for the fuel transfer. NRC regulations require licensees to submit such a report at least 30 days before spent fuel is transferred to an independent storage facility. The purpose of the 30-day waiting period is to give the NRC an opportunity to review test results.

In this case, however, the NRC has already verified the safety of the canisters that will contain the spent fuel, and the associated transfer cask, by performing detailed reviews and inspections. The agency has also completed its review of preoperational test results.

Toledo Edison requested--and NRC granted--an exemption to the regulations to reduce the length of the waiting period so that Toledo Edison can begin to load the dry storage casks on December 26.

In denying the request of the Toledo Coalition, the NRC said it would not order the halt on an emergency basis, but would continue to consider the issues in the request.

Inspectors from the NRC's Region III office in Lisle, Ill., will monitor the loading of the dry storage cask.

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