



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

September 14, 2023

Dr. Rusty Towell
Director of NEXT Lab
Abilene Christian University
ACU Box 27963
Abilene, TX 79699

SUBJECT: ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY – UPDATE TO THE CONSTRUCTION
PERMIT APPLICATION TECHNICAL REVIEW SCHEDULE
(EPID L-2022-NFW-0002)

Dear Dr. Towell:

The purpose of this letter is to inform Abilene Christian University (ACU) of the potential for a schedule change for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's review of the construction permit application for ACU's proposed Molten Salt Research Reactor (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML22227A201). By letter dated December 16, 2022 (ML22341A615), the NRC staff previously communicated that it planned to complete its review of the construction permit application by May 2024, assuming the completion of interim milestones identified in the letter, the first of which was the completion of the draft safety evaluation by August 2023.

The NRC staff remains engaged with ACU in regulatory audits supporting the NRC staff's review of the construction permit application. Over the last few months, the NRC staff and ACU have continued to work constructively to address many of the technical topics within the scope of audits; however, additional time is needed for ACU to provide necessary information to the NRC staff, for the NRC staff and ACU to bring resolution to the remaining topics, and for the NRC staff to review forthcoming preliminary safety analysis report (PSAR) changes that are necessary for the NRC staff to make its regulatory findings. As such, the draft safety evaluation was not completed in August 2023, as previously planned.

Because the timeline for the resolution of the remaining technical topics and the corresponding PSAR changes remains uncertain, the NRC staff will need to reassess the application review schedule communicated in the letter dated December 16, 2022, once the necessary information is provided by ACU. The NRC staff remains committed to working with ACU to drive the remaining technical topics to resolution in an expeditious manner. The NRC staff will work with ACU to provide a revised schedule and level of effort, as appropriate, for the completion of its safety and environmental reviews once the timeline for the resolution of the remaining technical topics and the corresponding PSAR changes becomes clear. Any revised schedule will take into account ACU's construction and operation schedule, while balancing the time needed for the NRC staff to perform its review of the application.

R. Towell

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If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-7190, or via email at Richard.Rivera@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,



Signed by Rivera, Richard
on 09/14/23

Richard Rivera, Project Manager
Advanced Reactor Licensing Branch 2
Division of Advanced Reactors and Non-Power
Production and Utilization Facilities
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No.: 50-610

cc: Abilene Christian University MSRR via GovDelivery

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