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

March 26, 2025

Jill Wood, Director
Office of Radiation Protection
Washington Department of Health
P.O. Box 47827
Olympia, WA 98504

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT AND FINDING OF
NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION
INDEPENDENT SPENT FUEL STORAGE INSTALLATION
DECOMMISSIONING FUNDING PLAN

Dear Jill Wood:

By letters dated November 28, 2018 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System [ADAMS] Accession No. ML18332A410), December 16, 2021 (ML21350A234), and December 11, 2024 (ML24346A104), Energy Northwest (EN), respectively, submitted updated decommissioning funding plans (DFPs) for the Columbia Generating Station (Columbia) independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI), located in Richland, Washington for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff review and approval. The NRC staff is currently reviewing these updated DFPs submitted by EN.

Previously, by letter dated July 7, 2016 (ML16189A440), the NRC consulted with the Washington Department of Health (State) regarding the EN initial 2012 DFP submittal for the Columbia ISFSI (ML123550043) and the updated 2015 DFP submittal (ML15351A459). The NRC staff noted that the State did not advise any substantive comments.

The NRC regulations at Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 72, "Licensing Requirements for the Independent Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel, High-Level Radioactive Waste, and Reactor-Related Greater than Class C Waste," govern the storage of spent nuclear fuel (spent fuel) generated at commercial nuclear power reactors licensed by the NRC. Spent fuel that has been removed from the reactor's spent fuel pool is typically stored at a nuclear power plant's ISFSI.

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The NRC requires its licensees to plan for the eventual decommissioning of their licensed facilities prior to license termination. On June 17, 2011, the NRC published a final rule amending its decommissioning planning regulations (76 *Federal Register* [FR] 35512). The final rule amended the NRC regulation, 10 CFR Section 72.30, which concerns financial assurance and decommissioning for ISFSIs. This regulation now requires each holder of, or applicant for, a license under 10 CFR Part 72 to submit, for NRC review and approval, a DFP. The purpose of the DFP is to demonstrate the licensee's financial assurance (i.e., that funds will be available to decommission the ISFSI). The NRC staff is reviewing the information submitted by EN.

Specifically, the NRC must determine whether EN's DFPs contain the information required by 10 CFR 72.30(c), and whether EN has provided reasonable assurance that funds will be available to decommission the Columbia ISFSI.

In accordance with 10 CFR Part 51, which contains the NRC regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the agency has prepared a separate draft environmental assessment (EA) for the Columbia ISFSI for the proposed action (enclosed). We are providing your office with the opportunity to review the draft EA and comment on environmental issues prior to the public issuance and publication of the EA. We request that distribution and use of the enclosed draft EA be limited only to those staff involved in the review and comment process.

Please submit any comments within 30 days from the date of this letter to the NRC, Document Control Desk, ATTN: Thomas Boyce, Mail Stop: TWFN 4B16, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. If you have any questions, please contact Heath Stroud of my staff by telephone at 301-287-3664, or by email at Heath.Stroud@nrc.gov. The NRC staff will consider your timely comments and will revise the EA, as appropriate, before its final issuance and publication. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Signed by Diaz-Sanabria, Yoira
on 03/26/25

Yoira Diaz-Sanabria, Chief
Storage and Transportation Licensing Branch
Division of Fuel Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No.: 72-35
License No.: SFGL-15
EPID No.: L-2017-FPR-0016

Enclosure:
Draft EA for Columbia ISFSI

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