

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20555-0001

April 27, 2026

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2026-04
COMBINED LICENSE REVIEW PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING**

ADDRESSEES

All current and potential applicants for a combined license (COL) for a nuclear power plant under the provisions of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 52, "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants."

INTENT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this regulatory issue summary (RIS) to discuss the performance and reporting requirements for a COL application review in accordance with Section 207, "Combined License Review Procedure," of the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy Act of 2024 (ADVANCE Act). This RIS applies only to the subset of license applications prescribed in the ADVANCE Act and does not transmit or imply any new or changed NRC requirements or staff positions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NRC Commitment to an Efficient and Effective Review

The NRC's mission is to protect public health and safety and advance the Nation's common defense and security by enabling the safe and secure use and deployment of civilian nuclear energy technologies and radioactive materials through efficient and reliable licensing, oversight, and regulation for the benefit of society and the environment. The NRC is committed to reviewing all license applications effectively and efficiently and employing risk-informed approaches to determine the scope of the NRC staff review.

Executive Order (EO) 14300, "Ordering the Reform of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission," dated May 23, 2025, requires the NRC to reform and modernize its regulations to include a "deadline of no more than 18 months for final decision on an application to construct and operate a new reactor of any type, commencing with the first required step in the regulatory process."¹ The NRC will comply with the review timeline in the EO.

¹ U.S. Presidential Executive Order 14300, "Ordering the Reform of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission," *Federal Register*, Vol. 90, No. 102, p. 22587, May 23, 2025: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-05-29/pdf/2025-09798.pdf>

SUMMARY OF ISSUE

The ADVANCE Act, signed into law in July 2024, affects a wide range of NRC activities, including by supporting the recruitment and retention of the NRC workforce; adding flexibility in the NRC's budgeting process; enhancing the regulatory framework for advanced reactors and fusion technology; and requiring initiatives to support the NRC's efficient, timely, and predictable reviews of license applications.

Subsection 207(a) of the ADVANCE Act requires the NRC to establish and carry out an expedited procedure for issuing a COL for qualifying applications. Subsection 207(b) states that to qualify for the expedited procedure, an applicant shall submit a COL application for a new nuclear reactor that references a design for which the Commission has issued a design certification or that has a design that is substantially similar to a design of a nuclear reactor for which the Commission has issued a COL, an operating license, or a manufacturing license. Further, subsection 207(b) states that to qualify for the expedited procedure, the applicant shall propose to construct the new nuclear reactor on a site on which a licensed commercial nuclear reactor operates or previously operated, or that is directly adjacent to a site on which a licensed commercial nuclear reactor operates or previously operated and has site characteristics that are substantially similar to those of that adjacent site, and the applicant may not be subject to an order of the Commission to suspend or revoke a license.

In the unlikely event that any of the ADVANCE Act section 207 deadlines are not met for the prescribed license applications, section 207 requires the NRC Executive Director for Operations to inform the Commission within 30 days. Exceeding any deadline by 90 days requires a report to Congress accounting for the delays and a plan for completion of the action.²

The NRC will review all license applications consistent with the timeliness expectations in EO 14300. Based on the EO timeline, the NRC has increased confidence that it will meet the deadlines in section 207 for the prescribed subset of license applications.

BACKFITTING AND ISSUE FINALITY DISCUSSION

This RIS does not require any action or written response by any licensee or applicant. Accordingly, the issuance of this RIS in final form would not represent backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50.109(a)(1), or be inconsistent with any applicable issue finality provision in 10 CFR Part 52. Therefore, the NRC did not prepare a backfit analysis for this RIS or further address the issue finality criteria in 10 CFR Part 52.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION

The NRC published a notice of opportunity for public comment on this RIS in the *Federal Register* (2025-16835) on September 3, 2025. The agency received comments from one commenter. The staff considered all comments, which did not result in any changes to the RIS. The staff discussed its consideration and resolution of the comments in the Appendix to this RIS made publicly available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML25272A240.

² ADVANCE Act subsection 207(c) prescribes the following deadlines: (1) not later than 18 months after accepting the application for docketing, complete and issue the safety evaluation report and issue the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment, (2) not later than 2 years after accepting the application for docketing, complete any necessary public licensing hearings and related processes, and (3) not later than 25 months after accepting the application for docketing, make a final decision on whether to issue the COL.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

The NRC has determined that this RIS is not a rule, as defined in the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801–808).

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

This RIS does not contain new or amended information collection requirements that are subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. § 3501 et seq.). Existing requirements were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under approval number 3150-0151.

PUBLIC PROTECTION NOTIFICATION

The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the document requesting or requiring the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

CONTACT

Please direct any questions about this matter to the technical contact or lead project manager listed below.

Michele Sampson, Director
Division of New and Renewed Licenses
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Heather Jones, Acting Deputy Director
Division of Reactor Oversight
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical Contact: Michelle Hayes, NRR
301-415-4126
Email: Michelle.Hayes@nrc.gov

Lead Project Manager: Carolyn Lauron, NRR
301-415-2736
Email: Carolyn.Lauron@nrc.gov

Note: NRC generic communications may be found on the NRC public website, <http://www.nrc.gov>, under NRC Library/Document Collections.