



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

January 12, 2026

Charlene Nijmeh, Chairperson
Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the
San Francisco Bay Area
1169 S. Main Street, Ste. 336
Manteca, CA, 95377

**SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF UPDATED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR THE
VALLECITOS BOILING WATER REACTOR AND GENERAL ELECTRIC TEST
REACTOR DECOMMISSIONING AND DEMOLITION (DOCKET NUMBERS:
05000018 AND 05000070)**

Dear Chairperson Charlene Nijmeh:

The purpose of this letter is to provide notification of an updated U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) environmental review for a license amendment request (LAR) to authorize major decommissioning activities at the Vallecitos Nuclear Center (VNC) in Alameda County, California. The LAR was submitted by NorthStar Vallecitos, LLC on September 26, 2024, pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities." The application is available under docket numbers 05000018 and 05000070.

As part of its environmental review of the VNC LAR, the NRC staff will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will be used to determine whether an environmental impact statement is necessary or a finding of no significant impact is warranted to satisfy the NRC's obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), as implemented by the NRC's regulations at 10 CFR 51, "Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions."

In accordance with Title 36 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (36 CFR) Section 800.8(c), the NRC intends to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA), through the NEPA process in lieu of the procedures set forth in 36 CFR 800.3 through 800.6. Therefore, the EA will include the identification of historic properties and historic and cultural resources, an assessment of impacts, and a determination. During the preparation of the EA, the NRC will follow the procedural requirements and standards set out in 36 CFR 800.8(c).

An architectural survey report was prepared by SEARCH (Downing et al, September 2023) that recommended the General Electric Test Reactor (GETR) (building 201) and Vallecitos Boiling Water Reactor (VBWR) (building 301) as individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A (contribution to the advancement of nuclear technology) and Criterion C (significance in engineering). Subsequently, the NRC staff sent

correspondence to the consulting parties determining the two buildings NRHP-eligible and indicating a finding of adverse effect for the undertaking. Correspondence is available through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html#web-based-adams>.

- California State Historic Preservation Officer (CA SHPO)
 - o dated December 20, 2024 ([ML24331A229](#))
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)
 - o dated February 24, 2025 ([ML25051A012](#))
- Thirteen state and federally recognized Tribes
 - o dated February 26, 2025 (package [ML25007A131](#))
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), invitation to consult
 - o dated April 16, 2025 ([ML25105A009](#))

Responses were received from the following parties:

- CA SHPO
 - o Dated February 11, 2025 ([ML25045A081](#))
- California Valley Miwok
 - o Dated February 27, 2025 (Package [ML25069A584](#))
- Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation
 - o Dated February 27, 2025 ([ML25069A685](#))
 - o Dated April 29, 2025 ([ML25167A229](#))
 - o Dated June 10, 2025 ([ML25167A227](#))
- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
 - o Dated March 11, 2025 ([ML25108A094](#))
- Tamien Nation
 - o Dated March 26, 2025 ([ML25092A007](#))
- ASME
 - o Dated May 8, 2025 (Package [ML25134A247](#))
- ACHP
 - o Dated May 30, 2025 ([ML25237A189](#))

The original architectural survey report (Downing et al, September 2023) identified an area of potential effect (APE) that was limited to the 200 and 300 complexes. However, based on consultation responses received, the NRC staff expanded the APE to include the entire VNC (approximately 1,600 acres), which includes complexes 100, 200, 300, and 400, and the Hillside Storage Area. An updated architectural survey was conducted by SEARCH (Suphanniam, et al, July 2025) that includes a re-evaluation of the 200 and 300 complexes and an evaluation of the newly identified APE, discusses and summarizes previous identification and evaluation efforts, and provides updated recommendations of eligibility and effect.

The updated architectural survey by Suphanniam, et al, July 2025, recommended that no buildings, structures, or objects within the APE are individually NRHP-eligible, and that no buildings, structures, or objects contribute to the eligibility of a potential district. Specifically, as it pertains to the GETR and VBWR, the report states that the character defining features of each were the internal components, consisting of their form, fuel, and machined parts. Suphanniam, et al, July 2025, concluded that since the internal components were removed, the GETR and VBWR no longer retain sufficient integrity to convey their significance.

During the lifespan of a reactor and containment building, normal operations include maintenance, removal, and replacement of fuel and facility/structure components, as well as alterations to facility/structure internals and externals. These activities are critical to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety and protect the environment, key aspects of NRC's mission statement. Due to the changes a reactor and containment building are subject to during their lifespan, feeling and association are the most significant aspects of its historical integrity. In addition, due to the security and safety measures present at nuclear facilities, the general public would not be familiar with reactor and containment building internals; they would be most familiar with the external appearance of such facilities.

National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (available online: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf) states that a property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the historical pattern. It also states that those essential physical features must be visible enough to convey their significance. Reactor/containment building internals are rarely, if ever, accessible to the public. Further, the bulletin states that for some historic buildings, their contribution to the built environment can be appreciated even if their interiors are not accessible. The NRC staff concludes that the GETR and VBWR maintain enough of the external physical features from their periods of significance to convey their association with their contribution to the advancement of nuclear technology.

The NRC staff concludes that no buildings, structures, or objects contribute to the eligibility of a potential district at the VNC. However, the NRC staff concludes that the GETR and VBWR retain sufficient integrity to convey their individual significance and has determined that they are NRHP-eligible under Criterion A (association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history) within the following contexts:

- GETR – contribution to the advancement of nuclear technology and as the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC, precursor to the NRC) first licensed test reactor; period of significance is 1958 – 1970
- VBWR – contribution to the advancement of nuclear technologies and as the AEC's first licensed power reactor; period of significance is 1957 – 1963

The NRC staff is currently reviewing NorthStar's license amendment request to authorize major decommissioning activities, including dismantlement and demolition of the GETR and VBWR. To address the potential impacts of such an authorization, the NRC staff has identified the following measures to be conducted by NorthStar:

- Updated DPR 523 Forms – Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record, as necessary.
- Interpretive roadside display.
- A good faith effort will be made to coordinate with the Department of Energy (DOE) to post a video detailing the history of the VNC to the DOE VNC website (<https://www.energy.gov/lm/vallecitos-nuclear-center-california-site>); this video will also be posted to the NRC website.
- Discovery situation training for VNC staff, providing education and direction on cultural resources discovery situations during applicable dismantlement or demolition activities.

- Preceding measures would be completed by NorthStar prior to dismantlement or demolition activities.

Based on the described measures, which are detailed in the EA, the NRC staff have made a preliminary determination of no adverse effect pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(b) since conditions are being imposed to avoid adverse effects. The draft historic and cultural resources section of the EA is available for review and comment at:

<https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/research-test/general-electric-co-getr>.

In accordance with its January 9, 2017, Tribal Policy Statement ([82 FR 2402](#)), the NRC encourages participation by State-recognized Tribes in the NRC's licensing and regulatory processes. Therefore, the NRC invites you to submit any comments or concerns that you may have regarding the scope of the NRC's updated environmental review of the proposed action (VNC LAR) within 30 days. After consideration of public comments and comments received from consulting parties, the NRC plans to issue the EA.

Please note that future correspondence will be sent via electronic format. If you would prefer to receive hard copy correspondence, please contact the points of contact listed below.

If you have any questions concerning the NRC's environmental review, please contact Beau Goldstein, Archaeologist, by phone at 301-415-1765 or by email at Beau.Goldstein@nrc.gov or Jill Caverly, Senior Environmental Project Manager, by phone at 301-415-7671 or by email at Jill.Caverly@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,



Signed by Davis, Desiree
on 01/12/26

Desiree Davis, Acting Chief
Environmental Technical Review Branch 1
Division of Rulemaking, Environmental,
and Financial Support
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket Nos. 005000018 and 05000070

cc: GEVallecitos Listserv
GETestReactor Listserv

Richard Massiatt, Councilmember/MLD Tribal Rep.
rmassiatt@muwekma.org

Non-public reference available upon request:

1. 2025 Suphanniam, Anna, Brittaney London, Chris Robinson, and Allen Kent.
Architectural History Survey of Vallecitos Nuclear Center, Alameda County, California.
Project No. 240079. SEARCH, Florida

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ADAMS Accession No: ML25328A004 (Package)

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