



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

February 8, 2026

Chris Nolan,
Vice President,
New Nuclear Generation Strategy
and Regulatory Engagement.
Duke Energy Corporation
13225 Hagers Ferry Rd., MG011E
Huntersville, NC 28078

SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE REVIEW RESULTS FOR AN EARLY SITE PERMIT
APPLICATION FOR BELEWS CREEK SITE

Dear Mr. Nolan:

By letter¹ dated December 30, 2025, Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (Duke) submitted an early site permit (ESP) application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the Belews Creek Site located in Stokes County, North Carolina, in accordance with the requirements contained in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 52, "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants," Subpart A, "Early Site Permits."

The NRC staff performed an acceptance review of the ESP application consistent with the requirements of 10 CFR 2.101, "Filing of application," 10 CFR 52.16, "Contents of applications; general information," 10 CFR 52.17, "Contents of applications; technical information," and 10 CFR 51.50, "Environmental report - construction permit, early site permit, or combined license stage." The NRC staff determined that the application is acceptable for docketing and contains sufficient information to initiate detailed safety and environmental technical reviews and establish a predictable review schedule. The docket number established for this application is 52-055. This docket number should be included in all future correspondence.

¹ Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC, "Duke Energy - Application for an Early Site Permit for the Duke Energy Belews Creek, NC Site NRC Project Number 99902121," December 30, 2026 (ML25364A004)

The tables below provide key milestones for both the safety review and the environmental review and support the issuance of a final safety evaluation report and final environmental impact statement within 15 months from docketing.

Safety Review Milestones	Estimated Completion Dates
Draft Safety Evaluation Report ¹	August 2026
Advanced Safety Evaluation Report ²	March 2027
Final Safety Evaluation Report	May 2027
Notes: 1. Safety Evaluation Report drafted and information gaps identified. 2. Safety Evaluation Report without open items.	

Environmental Review Milestones	Estimated Completion Dates
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	February 2027
Final Environmental Impact Statement	May 2027

It is estimated that the mandatory hearing will be completed within three months after issuance of the final safety evaluation report and final environmental impact statement and a decision on the ESP could be made by August 2027. Any potential contested hearings are not included in this schedule.

The schedule reflects the NRC staff's best estimate of the level of effort needed for its review and is based, in part, on Duke's commitments to provide timely support during technical audits and to respond to requests for additional information within 30 days of issuance. To achieve this schedule, the NRC staff intends to engage Duke frequently during the application review to assess progress and address emerging technical issues using audits, public meetings, and requests for additional information. Delays in the NRC staff's receipt of necessary information could result in changes to the review schedule. If potential delays arise in its support of the schedule, the NRC requests that Duke inform the NRC staff in writing, as early as possible.

Based on preapplication activities and the information provided in the application, the NRC staff estimates that it will need approximately 8,900 staff hours and \$1.2 million in contractor support to reach a final decision on the application. This resource estimate includes support for mandatory hearing activities.

The proposed schedule and resource estimates are dependent on Duke's commitment to provide supplemental confirmatory information, within 60 days from the date of this letter, to support the maximum hypothetical accident analysis provided in the application and demonstrate compliance with 10 CFR 52.17(a)(1)(ix). If this supplement includes new or significant information, the NRC staff will assess the impact on said schedule and resource estimates.

Following the issuance of this letter, a notice will be forwarded to the *Federal Register* informing the public of the docketing of Duke's ESP application for detailed review by the staff and the associated opportunity for a hearing on the contents of the application.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact, Mr. Emmanuel Sayoc, Project Manager, at (301) 415-4085 or by email at emmanuel.sayoc@nrc.gov, or Ms. India Banks, Project Manager, at (301) 287-0787 or by email at india.banks@nrc.gov. For questions that are specific to the environmental review please contact Mr. William Burris, Project Manager, at (301) 415-1621 or by email at william.burris@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,



Signed by Sayoc, Emmanuel
on 02/08/26

Emmanuel C. Sayoc, Project Manager
Licensing and Regulatory Infrastructure Branch
Division of New and Renewed Licenses
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No.: 05200055

Enclosure:
Federal Register Notice

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 APPLICATION FOR BELEWS CREEK SITE
 DATED: FEBRUARY 8, 2026

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