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

February 13, 2026

Mr. James McGowan
Department of the Navy,
Naval Sea Systems Command
1333 Isaac Hull Avenue, SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20376-0001

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR RECOMENDATION TO TRANSFER POSSESSION OF THE EX-ENTERPRISE (CVN 65) TO NORTHSTAR MARITIME DISMANTLEMENT SERVICES (DOCKET NUMBER: 001953) (CONTRACT N00024-25-C-4135)

Dear Mr. McGowen:

In an August 26, 2025, letter submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) (Agencywide Document Access and Management System [ADAMS] Accession No. ML25350C321), the Department of the Navy, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) requested NRC staff to review a request from NorthStar Maritime Dismantlement Services, LLC (NMDS) (ADAMS Accession No. ML25350C322). NAVSEA requested the NRC make a recommendation as to whether to transfer possession of the Ex-Enterprise (CVN 65) to NMDS for characterization and relocation to Mobile, Alabama before approval of the decommissioning work plan in anticipation of decommissioning activities described in the Decommissioning Work Plan (DWP) (ADAMS Accession No. ML25353A594) dated December 16, 2025, currently under NRC review.

Upon transfer, NMDS would assume responsibility for and control over the EX-Enterprise. The Navy would then proceed to prepare the ship for tow transport to the Modern American Recycling and Radiological Services of Alabama, LLC (MARRS) facility in Mobile, Alabama. Once at the MARRS facility, NMDS and its principle subcontractor will begin preparing for dismantling activities. As indicated by NMDS in their request referenced in your August 26, 2025, letter, NMDS will not commence decommissioning work unless NAVSEA accepts the proposed DWP, including consideration of the NRC's evaluation and recommendation.

According to the request, NMDS will leverage the experience of its parent company, NorthStar. NorthStar has more than 30 years of experience as a general contractor on radiological, commercial, and industrial projects while performing decontamination and decommissioning projects. Through its subsidiaries, NorthStar holds NRC licenses for Vermont Yankee, Nuclear Power Station (VY) and Crystal River Unit 3 (CR3). NMDS intends to staff technical support positions that are integral to the safe conduct radiological protection with key members of existing decommissioning projects. The organizational staffing levels following transfer of possession will align with that appropriate for a decommissioning nuclear power plant.
The referenced request indicates that NMDS will implement a management approach to

ensure sufficient and effective decontamination and decommissioning planning, preparation, and execution. Furthermore, the request for transfer of possession states NMDS will promote a safety conscious work environment, prioritize day-to-day industrial safety and radiological protection, ensure proper waste handling, and implement an effective corrective action program. The request further states that all NMDS employees and contractors will not be employed without being qualified for their positions in accordance with Regulatory Guide 1.8 “Qualification and Training of Personnel for Nuclear Power Plants.”

Also, in its request for transfer of possession, NMDS provided an organization chart showing the planned project organization. Resumes for key management personnel were also provided to document that key NMDS employees are qualified by education, training, and experience for their positions. The individual filling the Radiation Protection Manager position has more than 35 years of experience in radiation safety and has served as the senior radiation protection and chemistry manager at Crystal River Nuclear Plant.

Based on its review of the provided transfer request, the NRC staff determined that the applicants have described a project organization that will provide the requisite experience and expertise for the decommissioning of the EX-Enterprise. Therefore, the NRC recommends NAVSEA proceed with the transfer of possession with responsibility for EX-Enterprise to NMDS in order to complete preparations for decommissioning, including initial characterization, inspections, and transport to the MARRS facility in Mobile, Alabama pending the results of NRC's review and recommendation on acceptance of the DWP.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Agency Rules of Practice and Procedure," a copy of this letter will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records component of ADAMS. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html.

If you have any questions on this recommendation, please contact Craig Hendrickson at craig.hendrickson@nrc.gov, 301-415-6887.

Sincerely,

Michelle Sutherland Signed by Sutherland, Michelle on 02/13/26

Michelle M. Sutherland, Acting Chief
Reactor Decommissioning Branch
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Office of Nuclear Materials Safety
and Safeguards

Docket No. 001953
Contract No. N00024-25-C-4135

Response for Request for Recommendation to Transfer Possession of the Ex-Enterprise (CVN 65) to Northstar Maritime Dismantlement Services DATE February 17, 2026

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ADAMS Accession No.: ML26028A159; Ltr ML26028A159 *** via email**

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