MEETING SUMMARY (OPEN SESSION)

Subject: SUMMARY OF JANUARY 14, 2026, PARTIALLY CLOSED PRE-APPLICATION PUBLIC MEETING ON PRE-LICENSING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WITH GENERAL MATTER

Date: January 14, 2026

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff held a public meeting to discuss the fuel cycle facility licensing process and oversight considerations. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a high-level overview of the licensing process and regulatory framework for constructing fuel cycle facilities. This discussion was prompted by growing industry interest in expanding domestic uranium supply and the anticipated increase in applications to the NRC. The NRC staff highlighted their readiness to review applications and underscored the importance of communication and coordination throughout the process.

The NRC staff outlined the statutory and regulatory provisions governing construction activities. They clarified that while certain activities can occur prior to license issuance, others, particularly for uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities, are subject to strict statutory prohibitions under the Atomic Energy Act, Section 193. For other types of fuel facilities, construction may begin nine months after submitting an application, as specified in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 70.21(f) and 40.31(f). The staff stressed that pre-application engagement is highly encouraged to ensure applicants understand requirements and timelines, and to facilitate productive technical exchanges.

The presentation detailed the licensing process, which includes submission of a letter of intent, assignment of a docket number, pre-application meetings, application submission, NRC review of safety, safeguards, and environmental aspects, and, where applicable, hearings before a license decision is issued. The NRC staff also explained the definition of “construction” under 10 CFR 70.4 and 40.4, noting that certain preparatory activities—such as site excavation or installation of non-safety-related structures—are excluded from this definition and may proceed prior to licensing.

The discussion also addressed oversight and risk mitigation strategies for pre-licensing construction. The NRC staff confirmed that inspections of pre-licensing construction are conducted in accordance with Inspection Manual Chapter 2694 to ensure compliance. They emphasized the importance of robust quality assurance programs and a strong nuclear safety culture, along with early and frequent communication with NRC staff regarding proposed construction activities.

During the question-and-answer session, participants sought clarification on environmental review timing, statutory requirements for uranium enrichment facilities, and the interpretation of construction activities within existing structures. The NRC staff reiterated that environmental reviews must be completed before a licensing decision is made, and that enrichment facilities require license issuance and completion of mandatory hearings prior to construction. They also noted that questions involving design-specific scenarios should be addressed in pre-application meetings.

The meeting reinforced the NRC staff’s commitment to transparency and collaboration with industry stakeholders.

Key takeaways include the critical role of pre-application engagement, adherence to statutory and regulatory requirements, and proactive communication to avoid regulatory risks. The NRC staff encouraged applicants to consult relevant regulations and engage early to ensure a smooth licensing process.

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