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Duke Energy Corporation; Belews Creek Early Site Permit Application

Comment On: NRC-2025-2161-0007
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC; Belews Creek, North Carolina Site, Early Site Permit, Notice of Intent To Conduct Scoping Process and Prepare Environmental Impact Statement

Document: NRC-2025-2161-DRAFT-0013
Comment on FR Doc # 2026-08155, NRC-2025-2161-0007, from Robert Hayes

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General Comment

See attached file(s)

Attachments

NRC letter

May 11, 2026

To the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission,

I am writing in support of Duke Energy Carolinas' Early Site Permit application for potential small modular reactor development at the Belews Creek site in Stokes County, North Carolina under Docket ID NRC 2025 2161.

As a faculty member in nuclear engineering at North Carolina State University and an individual engaged in research, education, and public communication related to nuclear science and technology, I believe this project represents an important opportunity for North Carolina and the United States to strengthen reliable clean energy infrastructure while maintaining rigorous standards for safety and environmental stewardship.

Nuclear energy remains one of the few technologies capable of providing large scale continuous carbon free electricity generation while supporting grid stability and long term economic growth. Duke Energy's operational history in the Carolinas demonstrates decades of safe and reliable nuclear plant performance and continued investment in operational excellence. The proposed Belews Creek site offers substantial advantages because of its existing energy infrastructure, skilled workforce, transmission access, transportation capabilities, and long standing relationship with the surrounding community.

The pursuit of an Early Site Permit is a prudent and technically responsible step because it allows the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Duke Energy to evaluate environmental and safety considerations well in advance of any future construction decision. This process reduces uncertainty, supports transparent public engagement, and strengthens confidence that any future deployment would proceed under appropriate regulatory oversight.

I also believe the consideration of advanced reactor and small modular reactor technologies is strategically important for the future of American energy security and industrial competitiveness. As electricity demand increases from advanced manufacturing, electrification, artificial intelligence infrastructure, and data centers, reliable baseload generation will become increasingly important. Advanced nuclear systems have the potential to provide resilient long duration clean energy while supporting economic development and high wage technical employment.

The Belews Creek project also presents an opportunity to retain and transition an experienced energy workforce while continuing to support the local tax base and regional economy following the planned retirement of existing fossil generation assets. Repurposing existing industrial energy sites for advanced nuclear development represents a practical and economically responsible pathway for modernization of the electric grid.

I appreciate the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's continued commitment to technical rigor, transparency, and public safety throughout this review process and encourage careful consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Hayes
Department of Nuclear Engineering
North Carolina State University