



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

August 12, 2026

Jaime Loichinger, Director
Office of Federal Agency Programs
Advisory Council on Historic
Preservation
401 F Street NW, Suite 308
Washington, DC 20001-2637

SUBJECT: INITIATION OF SECTION 106 CONSULTATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
CONSTRUCTION PERMIT APPLICATION FOR A RESEARCH REACTOR,
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS (EPID NUMBER: L-2025-NPE-0000;
DOCKET NUMBER: 50-618)

Dear Director Loichinger:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is conducting an environmental review for a construction permit (CP) application submitted by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (U. of I.) for the construction of a research reactor on the U. of I. campus. This application was submitted to the NRC pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," and Section 104c of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. The purpose of this letter is to provide notification of the NRC's environmental review activities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and to initiate consultation activities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

The proposed undertaking is to determine whether to issue a CP for the construction of a research reactor on the U. of I. campus. The research reactor, referred to as the U. of I. KRONOS Micro Modular Reactor (KRONOS MMR™), would consist of a single, high-temperature gas cooled research reactor developed by NANO Nuclear Energy, Inc., which would include a molten salt secondary loop, and would function as a research, education, and training facility.

Construction of the research reactor would occur on approximately 1.01 acres on the western edge of the U. of I. campus, situated east of the Abbott Power Plant and directly north of the National Register of Historic Places-eligible Geological Survey Laboratory building (Enclosure U of I Topographic Map / Area of Potential Effect Map). The Citadel building, which would house the research reactor, would extend approximately 60 feet (18.3 meters) below ground surface. Relatedly, U. of I. would construct a pipeline from the molten salt secondary loop of the research reactor to the Abbott Power Plant to pipe steam to the power plant. The Abbott Power Plant currently functions as a multi-fuel installation capable of utilizing natural gas, fuel oil, and coal.

In the context of the NHPA, the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed undertaking has been determined to be 6.17 acres, bounded by E. Armory Avenue to the north and E. Gregory Drive to the south, extending west to the outer edge of the Abbott Power Plant facilities

and east to the perimeter of the Personnel Services Building, encompassing a section of S. Oak Street (Enclosure U of I Topographic Map / Area of Potential Effect Map). The APE includes the approximately 1.01-acre site of the research reactor and a buffer. The proposed undertaking would not include any physical modifications to or interactions with the National Register of Historic Places-eligible Geological Survey Laboratory building.

As part of its environmental review of the U. of I. CP application, 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 NEPA, as implemented by the NRC's regulations at 10 CFR Part 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 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 and cultural resources and historic properties, an assessment of potential effects of the proposed undertaking, including potential effects on historic and cultural resources and historic properties, and the NRC staff's determination. During the preparation of the EA, the NRC will follow the procedural requirements and standards set out in 36 CFR 800.8(c).

The CP application is available through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), which is accessible online at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>, under Package Accession No. [ML26090A463](#). The environmental report portion of the CP application is available under [ML26090A468](#). Additional information about the proposed undertaking is available on the NRC's project website at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/advanced/who-were-working-with/applicant-projects/kronos>.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC invites you to submit any comments or concerns that you may have regarding NHPA Section 106 consultation for the U. of I. CP application within 30 days of the date of this letter. These comments and concerns may be submitted to the points of contact listed below. The NRC will make available the draft historic and cultural resources section of the EA for your review and comment. After consideration of public comments and comments received from consulting parties, the NRC plans to issue the EA in February 2027.

If you have any questions regarding the NRC's NHPA Section 106 consultation or environmental review, please contact Michelle Rome, Environmental Project Manager and NHPA Section 106 lead, via email at Michelle.Rome@nrc.gov or William Burris, Environmental Project Manager, via email at William.Burris@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,



Signed by Sean Peters on 08/12/26

Sean E. Peters, Acting Chief
Advanced Reactor Environmental Review Branch
Division of Advanced Reactor Programs
Office of Advanced Reactors
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Docket No.: 50-618

Enclosure: As stated

cc: Granicus Communications
(formerly GovDelivery)

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DATED: August 12, 2026

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ADAMS Package No.: ML26223A140; Letter: ML26223A141; Encl: ML26223A143

e-Concurrence case: 20260811-01800