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

November 23, 2026

Kimberly Manzione
Executive Director, Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Holtec International
Krishna P. Singh Technology Campus
1 Holtec Blvd., Camden, NJ 08104

SUBJECT: HOLTEC SMR-300 PIONEER UNITS 1 AND 2 LIMITED WORK AUTHORIZATION APPLICATION REVIEW SCHEDULE UPDATE

Dear Ms. Manzione:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate the interim status of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff's review of the limited work authorization (LWA) request for Pioneer Units 1 and 2, including a revision to the schedule milestones for the draft safety evaluation and draft and final environmental impact statement.

By letter dated December 31, 2025, SMR, LLC, on behalf of Palisades SMR, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Holtec International (collectively, Holtec), submitted the first part of a phased construction permit application, including an LWA request, to the NRC (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML25365A983). The LWA application requests NRC approval to conduct certain early construction activities of a dual-unit SMR-300 plant, Pioneer Units 1 and 2, located at the Palisades Energy Center in Covert, Michigan, in accordance with the requirements of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 50.10, "License required; limited work authorization."

On February 13, 2026, the NRC staff transmitted a letter to Holtec stating that the application was found to be acceptable to begin a detailed technical review and provided the estimated review schedule and resources (ML26041A223). The table below provides updated estimated completion dates for the key review milestones:

	Original Estimated Completion Dates	**Estimated Completion Dates**
Safety Review Milestones		
Draft Safety Evaluation Report (with information gaps)	August 2026	Completed – August 2026
Advanced Safety Evaluation Report (without open items)	January 2027	March 2027
Final Safety Evaluation Report	March 2027	March 2027
Environmental Review Milestones		
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	October 2026	TBD
Final Environmental Impact Statement	March 2027	TBD

The NRC staff issued an exemption to allow construction of permanent retaining walls prior to LWA issuance on August 28, 2026 (91 FR 55628). The associated Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact was published on August 25, 2026 (91 FR 54890). By letter dated September 29, 2026, the NRC staff notified Holtec regarding the fixed cap on service fees associated with the NRC's review of the Pioneer Units 1 and 2 LWA application (ML26266A011).

Safety Review

During the regulatory audit of the safety-related portion of the application, the NRC staff identified several areas where additional information is required in order for the staff to be able to complete its safety review. Therefore, the staff requires additional time to review the supplemental information and complete the Advanced Safety Evaluation Report (SER). The NRC staff expects to complete the Advanced SER by early March 2027. The scheduled month for Final SER completion remains unchanged, March 2027.

Environmental Review

The NRC and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District (USACE) are cooperating on the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) designed to satisfy the environmental review obligations of both agencies. The NRC is the lead Federal agency preparing the EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The USACE is a cooperating agency and will provide special expertise for activities of the project that are under USACE's jurisdiction.

On August 24, 2026, Holtec filed a Joint Permit Application (JPA) with the Michigan Department of the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and on August 27, 2026, Holtec provided a copy of that filing to USACE. EGLE and USACE responded to Holtec with separate requests for additional information (dated September 23, 2026, and November 3, 2026, respectively) needed for the JPA to be considered administratively complete. This additional information is also needed for the NRC and USACE staff to identify the assumptions that will be used to complete the Draft EIS.

Because issuance of the Pioneer Units 1 and 2 EIS is dependent on the action of a third party (i.e., USACE as a cooperating agency), it is incumbent on the applicant to adequately plan, coordinate, or take other appropriate action to provide sufficient information in a timely manner to complete its part of the environmental review. However, as of the date of this letter, Holtec has not provided USACE with the additional information needed to complete the JPA, issue a public notice, and allow its formal review to proceed. Consequently, the NRC staff anticipates a substantial delay in completing the Draft EIS, which will, in turn, prevent the NRC from maintaining its original estimated review schedule for the LWA.

The NRC staff is coordinating with USACE to identify the best approach for completing the environmental review. After USACE informs the NRC of its receipt of the completed JPA and USACE and NRC align on the appropriate path forward, the NRC staff will develop a revised schedule for issuing the Draft EIS and Final EIS and notify Holtec of these revised milestones via separate correspondence.

Given the recent changes to the Commission's policy on mandatory hearings (91 FR 34661; June 8, 2026), it is estimated that the mandatory hearing will be completed in early 2027, prior

to issuance of the Final SER and Final EIS. A decision on the LWA will be made after issuance of the Final EIS and after completion of any potential contested hearings.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Victoria Huckabay, Senior Project Manager, at (301) 415-5183 or by email at Victoria.Huckabay@nrc.gov. For questions that are specific to the environmental review, please contact Robert Hoffman, Senior Environmental Project Manager, at (301) 415-1107 or by email at Robert.Hoffman@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,



Victoria Huckabay, Senior Project Manager
Advanced Reactor Licensing Branch 2
Division of Advanced Reactor Licensing
Office of Advanced Reactors

Docket Nos. 05000616
05000617

cc: Pioneer Units 1 and 2 LWA Application – Environmental Review via GovDelivery
Pioneer Units 1 and 2 LWA Application – Safety Review via GovDelivery

SUBJECT: HOLTEC SMR-300 PIONEER UNITS 1 AND 2 LIMITED WORK AUTHORIZATION APPLICATION REVIEW SCHEDULE UPDATE DATED: NOVEMBER 23, 2026

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