



NRC NEWS

Office of Public Affairs, Headquarters

Washington, DC. 20555-0001
www.nrc.gov ■ opa.resource@nrc.gov



No: 19-056
CONTACT: Scott Burnell, 301-415-8200

November 4, 2019

NRC Approves Changes to Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station's Emergency Planning Requirements

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has granted a request to alter the emergency preparedness plan for the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth, Mass., to reflect the plant's decommissioning status. Entergy Nuclear Operations requested the change prior to the Aug. 22, 2019, order issued by the NRC staff, which approved the transfer of Entergy's licensed operating authority to Holtec, LLC. Under the terms of the order, Entergy's pending request was also transferred to Holtec Decommissioning International.

The changes come in the form of exemptions from NRC requirements that are no longer appropriate for the plant now that it has permanently ceased operations. These exemptions are consistent with NRC actions for previous decommissioning plants. Once HDI implements the exemptions, state and local governments may rely on comprehensive emergency management ("all hazard") planning for off-site emergency response to events at Pilgrim, rather than having a dedicated offsite radiological emergency response plan. As a result, there will not be a 10-mile emergency planning zone identified in Pilgrim's license. The plant will maintain an onsite emergency plan and response capabilities, including the continued notification of state government officials in the event of an emergency declaration.

The exemption request provided analyses to show the exemptions are warranted. When compared to an operating power reactor, the risk of an offsite radiological release is significantly lower and the types of possible accidents are significantly fewer at a nuclear power reactor that has permanently ceased operations and removed fuel from the reactor vessel. The NRC staff [evaluated and confirmed](#) these analyses, along with considering comments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Based on the [NRC staff's evaluation and recommendation](#), the Commission [approved the exemptions](#) today. The exemptions, a safety evaluation and associated license amendments reflecting the changes will be issued in the next few weeks. Under the exemptions, HDI may not implement the changes to its emergency preparedness plans until April 1, 2020.

Pilgrim, a single boiling-water reactor, began operations in 1972. It ceased operations May 31, 2019. All spent fuel has been permanently moved from the reactor vessel into the spent fuel pool for storage. The exemptions from certain emergency preparedness requirements are part of several changes to the plant's licensing basis and technical specifications the licensee requested to reflect Pilgrim's decommissioning status.