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NRC Approves Changes to Duane Arnold Energy Center Emergency Planning Requirements

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has granted a request to revise the emergency preparedness plan for the Duane Arnold Energy Center in Iowa to reflect the plant's decommissioning status. NextEra Energy Duane Arnold LLC requested the change.

The changes come in the form of exemptions from NRC requirements no longer appropriate for a plant that has permanently ceased operations. These exemptions are consistent with NRC actions at other decommissioning plants. Once NextEra implements the exemptions, state and local governments may rely on comprehensive emergency management ("all hazard") planning for off-site emergency response should events occur at Duane Arnold. As a result, there will not be a 10-mile emergency planning zone as currently identified in the plant'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 included analyses to show the exemptions are warranted. After a nuclear power plant has permanently ceased operations and removed fuel from the reactor vessel, the risk of an offsite radiological release is significantly lower, and the types of possible accidents significantly fewer, than at an operating reactor. The NRC staff evaluated and confirmed these analyses and considered comments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Based on the [NRC staff's evaluation and recommendation](#), the Commission [approved the exemptions](#) Feb. 11. The exemptions, a safety evaluation, and associated license amendments reflecting the changes will be issued in the next few weeks. Under the exemptions, NextEra may not implement the changes to its emergency preparedness plans until June 10, 2021.

Duane Arnold is a single-unit boiling water reactor located in Palo, Iowa, approximately eight miles northwest of Cedar Rapids. The plant operated from February 1975 until August 2020.