



NRC NEWS

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NRC Announces Opportunity to Request a Hearing on Duke Energy Carolinas' Belews Creek Early Site Permit Application

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has announced in the Federal Register the [opportunity](#) to request an adjudicatory hearing for Duke Energy Carolinas' Early Site Permit application for the Belews Creek site in North Carolina. The notice covers petitions to intervene in such a hearing.

Petitions must be filed by April 10, by anyone whose interest may be affected by the proposed permit and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding. Additional information on the [hearing process](#) is available on the NRC website.

The NRC staff has determined that the application contains sufficient information for the agency to formally docket it and begin its detailed technical reviews. Docketing the application is not an indication of whether the NRC will grant the ESP.

The company submitted the application on Dec. 30, 2025, seeking an ESP that would accommodate advanced small modular reactors, including designs that cool the core with liquid metals, molten salts or high-temperature gases. The permit would encompass a maximum total output of 2,250 megawatts electric. The 1,000-acre site is adjacent to the Belews Creek Steam Station, an existing coal/natural gas power plant. Information about the NRC's interactions with Duke regarding the Belews Creek project is available on the NRC [website](#).

An ESP resolves certain site safety, environmental protection, and emergency preparedness issues independent of a specific nuclear plant design. An ESP does not allow nuclear power plant construction or operation; Duke would have to successfully apply separately for a construction permit and operating license or combined operating license in the future.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission was created as an expert, technical agency to protect public health, safety, and security, and regulate the civilian use of nuclear materials, including enabling the deployment of nuclear power for the benefit of society. Among other responsibilities, the agency issues licenses, conducts inspections, initiates and enforces regulations, and plans for incident response. The global gold standard for nuclear regulation, the NRC is collaborating with interagency partners to implement reforms outlined in new Executive Orders and the ADVANCE Act to streamline agency activities and enhance efficiency.