



NRC NEWS

Office of Public Affairs, Headquarters



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

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CONTACT: [Office of Public Affairs](#), 301-415-8200

NRC Debuts Modernized Hearing Process for Nation's First Advanced Reactor Construction Permit Review

ROCKVILLE, Md. — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will debut a new public hearing process on Aug. 13 during its review of the Tennessee Valley Authority's proposed Clinch River small modular reactor, marking the first time the agency has used its modernized mandatory hearing framework for an advanced reactor licensing review.

The redesigned hearing process gives the public earlier and more meaningful insight into the NRC's safety and environmental reviews while supporting the agency's broader effort to make licensing reviews more transparent, predictable and efficient. The hearing comes as the NRC targets construction permit decisions within 18 months as part of its modernization initiative.

TVA's proposed BWRX-300 at the Clinch River site near Oak Ridge would generate about 300 megawatts of carbon-free electricity and is among the leading advanced reactor projects under review in the United States. The NRC expects to complete its construction permit review later this year.

"This is a better way to engage the public," Jeremy Bowen, director of the NRC's Office of Advanced Reactors, said. "We're bringing people into the licensing process earlier, providing greater transparency into our safety review, and supporting timely, predictable decisions on the next generation of nuclear plants."

The [hearing](#) starts at 5 p.m. at the Pollard Center, 210 Badger Ave., in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and will include a brief presentation on the NRC's safety evaluation and supplemental environmental impact statement for the project, followed by an extended Q&A.

Mandatory hearings are a required part of the NRC's licensing process for new reactors, separate from the agency's "contested" hearing process, which allows formal legal challenges. The NRC published the opportunity to challenge the Clinch River application in July 2025.

If the NRC issues the construction permit, TVA must still submit a separate operating license application before the reactor could begin generating power. More information on new reactor licensing is available at [nrc.gov](#).

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 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.