



NRC NEWS

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NRC Approves Construction of Nation's First Small Modular Reactor

TVA's Clinch River Project Receives Construction Permit After 14-Month NRC Review

ROCKVILLE, Md. — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission approved a [construction permit](#) for the Tennessee Valley Authority to build a small modular nuclear reactor at its Clinch River site in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, clearing the way for the nation's first commercial small modular reactor and completing the NRC's review in 14 months. This is the agency's second major reactor approval this year.

"Four months ahead of schedule is what the new NRC looks like," NRC Chairman Ho K. Nieh said. "Today's Clinch River decision demonstrates that the new NRC can make rigorous and credible safety decisions that enable major American nuclear projects to move forward."

The NRC formally began its review in July 2025 and completed its licensing decision in 14 months, ahead of schedule. The approval follows a comprehensive [safety evaluation](#) completed by the NRC staff in June 2026, which found that TVA's construction permit application met all regulatory requirements. The NRC also held a public hearing in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in August as part of its modernized mandatory hearing process.

TVA plans to build a 300-megawatt GE Vernova Hitachi boiling-water reactor to help meet growing regional power demand. Before loading fuel and starting operations, TVA will need a separate operating license from the NRC. TVA previously received an [early site permit](#) for the Clinch River site in 2019.

More information on advanced 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.