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EO14300 Rulemaking

NRC Streamlines Advisory Committee Role To Support Advanced Nuclear Licensing

ROCKVILLE, Md. — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is modernizing the role of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to focus its independent technical expertise on the safety issues where it can provide the greatest value, supporting more efficient licensing of advanced nuclear technologies.

A direct final rule, to be published soon in the Federal Register, focuses ACRS reviews on safety-significant issues, including issues involving "truly novel or noteworthy" reactor technologies. The changes support the NRC's ability to meet the aggressive licensing timelines established by Executive Order 14300 while preserving independent expert review of nuclear safety.

"ACRS provides the Commission with an important independent source of technical expertise," said NRC Chairman Ho K. Nieh. "This reform focuses that expertise where it matters most — on the novel and safety-significant issues that require the Committee's expertise — while helping the NRC make timely, well-supported licensing decisions."

The ACRS is an independent advisory committee established by the Atomic Energy Act to advise the Commission on the hazards of proposed or existing reactor facilities and the adequacy of proposed safety standards. The rule clarifies and focuses the scope of ACRS reviews on first-of-a-kind designs, emerging safety issues and other matters where the Committee's independent technical expertise can provide the greatest value.

"The Committee is well positioned to continue to be a science-based committee of experts with a deep level of experience," said Greg Halnon, ACRS Chairman. "This rule is reflective of our mission to provide expert advice to the Commission on the safety of the advanced nuclear technologies being proposed for construction and operation in the country.'

The direct final rule will take effect 75 days after publication in the Federal Register, unless the NRC receives significant adverse comments. The agency will continue to engage stakeholders and the public as it implements these reforms.

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.