



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES SAFETY EVALUATION FOR NORTH ANNA EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued its final safety evaluation report (SER) for a requested Early Site Permit (ESP) at the North Anna site in Louisa County, Va., about 40 miles northwest of Richmond.

The ESP process allows an applicant to resolve certain safety and environmental issues related to siting prior to submitting an application to build a new nuclear power plant. An ESP denotes a site's suitability for construction and operation of a nuclear plant. The North Anna application was filed Sep. 25, 2003, by Dominion Nuclear North Anna, LLC. If approved, the permit would allow Dominion to reserve the site for up to 20 years. A future application for a construction permit or combined license at the North Anna site could then reference the ESP.

NRC reviewers and inspectors reviewed and verified the information that Dominion provided to resolve issues noted in a draft SER issued in December 2004. The staff noted several issues that must be addressed later – in any application to build a new reactor at the site – such as shutdown actions for the proposed Unit 3 if the adjacent Lake Anna's water level falls below a certain point. The staff has also recommended eight conditions to be imposed on the Early Site Permit if the Commission decides to issue it, including:

- Requiring use of a dry cooling tower by the proposed Unit 4 during normal operation, and
- Requiring a design for a radioactive waste facility with features that preclude any accidental radionuclide release into a liquid pathway (e.g., groundwater).

A final decision on the ESP application is expected in mid-2006, after receipt of a report from the NRC's independent Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, issuance of the staff's final Environmental Impact Statement, and the conclusion of an NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board hearing on the application.

NRC staff has reviewed information Dominion provided regarding the ESP site in areas including:

- site seismology, geology, meteorology and hydrology;
- risks from potential accidents resulting from operation of a nuclear plant at the site;
- the site's ability to support adequate physical security for a nuclear plant; and

– proposed major features of the emergency plan Dominion would implement if a reactor is eventually built at the site.

Dominion will have 14 days to review the SER for proprietary information. The report will then be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md. It will also be available on the NRC's Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/esp/north-anna.html> . In addition, the Louisa County Library, 881 Davis Highway in Mineral, Va., has agreed to make the SER available for public inspection.

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