NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC APPROVES CERTIFICATION OF WESTINGHOUSE'S AP1000 ADVANCED REACTOR DESIGN

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has voted to approve a final design certification rule for the AP1000 advanced reactor design, submitted by Westinghouse Electric Co. in March 2002. The certification, which will be contained in the NRC's amended regulations, will be the fourth issued under the agency's new reactor licensing process for standard design certification and will be valid for 15 years. The Commission's action is subject to the approval of the information collection requirements by the Office of Management and Budget.

"Several utilities have said they're interested in applying for licenses to build new reactors," said Jim Dyer, Director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. "Once this design certification is published as a final rule, a utility can reference the AP1000 in a combined license application."

With a certified design rule, safety issues within the scope of the design are not subject to litigation, although site-specific environmental impacts associated with building and operating the plant at a particular location are. No applications for a combined license referencing the AP1000 have been filed with the NRC.

The NRC issued the proposed AP1000 design certification rule in April 2005, inviting the public to submit comments on the AP1000 design control document, the proposed rule and the environmental assessment. The rule certifying the AP1000 design will become effective 30 days after it is published in the *Federal Register*.

The NRC issued a final design approval for the AP1000 in September 2004, setting the stage for the certification rulemaking. Further information on the AP1000 review can be found on the NRC's web site at this address: http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/design-cert/ap1000.html.

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