



NRC NEWS

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NRC MOVES UNFINISHED BELLEFONTE REACTORS TO DEFERRED STATUS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) request to change the unfinished Bellefonte Unit 1 & 2 reactors to "deferred" status.

"This is just one step in a long list of actions TVA must complete before they resume construction at Bellefonte," said Eric Leeds, director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. "We'll continue inspecting TVA's efforts to ensure they're maintaining the site and all the information necessary to support the plant in deferred status."

Placing Bellefonte in "deferred" status lets TVA further evaluate the viability of completing construction and attempting to license the reactors for operation. TVA submitted a request Aug. 10, 2009, to move the reactors to "deferred" status. The NRC's review of the request's supporting information included inspection of the Bellefonte site, near Hollywood, Ala., in October 2009. Unit 1's construction permit will expire Oct. 1, 2011, and Unit 2's permit will expire Oct. 1, 2014. TVA has not indicated if it will seek to extend the permits, nor when it might seek to restart construction activities. TVA has indicated it will give the NRC 120 days' advance notice of any construction work, as well as provide information laid out in Commission policy to support such a decision.

The Commission, in February 2009, authorized the staff to take the unique step of reinstating the permits, which TVA had withdrawn in 2006. TVA had asked the NRC to reinstate the permits for Bellefonte in August 2008.

The NRC staff issued an Order on March 9, 2009, reinstating the permits in a "terminated" status, meaning that TVA had to provide additional information to show the plants could be changed to "deferred" status, which would be necessary to put the plants on a path to possible future construction. The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, the Bellefonte Efficiency and Sustainability Team, and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy are challenging the NRC's Order before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

The agency granted construction permits for Bellefonte's two pressurized-water reactors in 1974. By 1988, when TVA deferred completion of the plant, Unit 1 was approximately 88

percent complete, and Unit 2 was approximately 58 percent complete. There is no nuclear fuel on the site. The Bellefonte site is located on approximately 1,600 acres adjacent to the Tennessee River in northern Alabama.

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