



NRC NEWS

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON ASSUMPTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY OF EXTENDED STORAGE OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission seeks public comment on a report updating preliminary assumptions for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) the agency will develop to analyze the effects of storing spent nuclear fuel from the nation's commercial power reactors for as much as 200 years.

The EIS will be part of the agency's effort to update its Waste Confidence Decision and Rule, last updated in 2010. The report being made available for comment is an early effort to obtain public input about the general scope of the EIS before the NRC formally initiates the EIS "scoping" process. The EIS will include analyses of environmental impacts that are directly related to the long-term handling, storage and transportation of commercial spent fuel and high-level waste.

The report discusses several storage scenarios, including at nuclear power plants, regional or centralized storage sites or a combination of storage and reprocessing of spent fuel. A key assumption is that extended storage would be managed under a regulatory program similar to current regulation of spent fuel. To analyze the impacts associated with the scenarios, the staff will develop generic, composite sites for each scenario, and these sites will account for a range of characteristics of actual reactor and storage sites.

The report, entitled "Background and Preliminary Assumptions for an Environmental Impact Statement – Long-Term Waste Confidence Update," was posted Jan. 3 on the NRC [website](#). The report updates assumptions first laid out in [SECY-11-0029](#), dated Feb. 28, 2011.

As revised in 2010, the Waste Confidence Decision and Rule included the Commission's confidence that spent fuel can be safely managed until it undergoes final disposition. At the same time, the Commission directed the staff to prepare a long-term update to the Waste Confidence Decision and Rule that would cover extended storage of spent fuel. This long-term update is to be informed by the analysis and conclusions of the EIS anticipated in the current report.

Comments on the report may be filed by email to WCO Outreach@nrc.gov or by U.S mail to Christine Pineda, Project Manager, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Mailstop EBB-2B2, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

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