



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov

Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. 10-162

September 15, 2010

NRC APPROVES UPDATES TO NUCLEAR WASTE CONFIDENCE FINDINGS AND RULE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved final revisions to the agency's "Waste Confidence" findings and regulation, expressing the Commission's confidence that the nation's spent nuclear fuel can be safely stored for at least 60 years beyond the licensed life of any reactor and that sufficient repository capacity will be available when necessary.

In a Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM) approved and issued today, the Commission approved the revisions to the draft final rule and additionally directed the staff to initiate a long-term rulemaking to address impacts of storage at onsite storage facilities, offsite storage facilities or both for extended periods.

"Today the Commission affirmed our confidence that spent nuclear fuel can be stored safely and securely without significant environmental impacts for at least 60 years after operation at any nuclear power plant," said NRC Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko. "We also directed the NRC staff to conduct additional analysis for longer-term storage to ensure that we remain fully informed by current circumstances and scientific knowledge relating to spent fuel storage and disposal. This decision was carefully considered by the Commission. It is an important step forward as it provides a measure of certainty to all of our stakeholders."

The Commission made clear in its SRM that the revisions of the waste confidence findings and rule are not intended to signal an endorsement of indefinite storage of spent fuel at reactor sites.

The current Waste Confidence rule (10 CFR Part 51.23) and findings, that this new rule and findings will update, express confidence that commercial high-level radioactive waste and spent fuel generated by any reactor "can be stored safely and without significant environmental impacts for at least 30 years beyond the licensed life for operation (which may include the term of a revised or renewed license) of that reactor" in its spent fuel basin or at either onsite or offsite independent spent fuel storage installations.

The SRM gives the staff 60 days to incorporate these revisions to the Waste Confidence rule and findings before sending them to the *Federal Register* for publication. It also directs the staff to provide a plan to the Commission for the long-term rulemaking by the end of the calendar year.

###

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.