



NRC NEWS

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NRC APPROVES SPENT FUEL POOL EXPANSION AT HARRIS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved Carolina Power & Light Company's (CP&L's) request to expand the capacity for storage of spent nuclear fuel at its Shearon Harris Nuclear Power plant by placing two additional spent fuel pools in service.

The Harris plant, located 21 miles southwest of Raleigh, N.C., was originally designed for four reactors, but only one was completed. However, the plant's fuel handling building has four spent fuel pools, as originally planned. The NRC operating license for Harris issued in 1987 authorized CP&L to use two of those pools for storage of spent fuel from the Harris plant and from the company's other nuclear power reactors, Brunswick Units 1 and 2, near Southport, N.C., and H.B. Robinson, near Hartsville, S.C.

In December 1998, CP&L asked the NRC for a license amendment to approve placing the two additional spent fuel pools in service at Harris in order to provide spent fuel storage capacity for all four of its nuclear units through the end of their current licenses.

In February 1999, the Board of Commissioners of Orange County, N.C., filed a petition to intervene and requested a hearing related to CP&L's request. The NRC granted the petition, and established an NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) to review Orange County's contentions. The ASLB's review is ongoing.

However, the NRC staff has completed its review of the amendment application and the issues in contention. Under its regulations, the NRC may issue an amendment immediately effective in advance of the holding or completion of a hearing, where it has determined that no significant hazards considerations are involved. A proposed amendment involves no significant hazards consideration if operation of the facility in accordance with the amendment would not: (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety.

The NRC has made a final determination that the amendment for Harris involves no significant hazards considerations. The basis for this determination is contained in a safety evaluation issued with the amendment. Accordingly, the amendment has been issued and made immediately effective. The

amendment is subject to modification or other action that may result from the ASLB's decision on the completion of the adjudicatory proceeding.

A copy of the safety evaluation and the environmental assessment related to the amendment will be available from the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, telephone: 301/4115-4737, or electronically through the Public Electronic Reading Room link at the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov> .

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