



NRC NEWS

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NRC RENEWS LICENSES FOR CATAWBA AND McGUIRE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS FOR AN ADDITIONAL 20 YEARS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has renewed the operating licenses of the Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, and the McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, for an additional 20 years. The Catawba units are near Rock Hill, S.C., and the McGuire units are near Charlotte, N.C. Both plants are operated by Duke Energy Corporation.

The NRC received the license renewal application from Duke on June 14, 2001. With the renewal, the license for Catawba Unit 1 is extended from December 6, 2024, to December 5, 2043, and the license for Catawba Unit 2 is extended from February 24, 2026, to December 5, 2043. The license for McGuire Unit 1 is extended from June 12, 2021, to June 12, 2041, and the license for McGuire Unit 2 is extended from March 3, 2023, to March 3, 2043.

The NRC's environmental review is described in site-specific supplements to the NRC's "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Power Plants," (NUREG-1437, Supplements 8 and 9). In the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements, issued in December 2002, the staff concluded there were no environmental impacts that would preclude renewal of the licenses for environmental reasons. Two public meetings to discuss the environmental review were held near the plants on June 12 and 27, 2002.

In its "Safety Evaluation Report Related to the License Renewal of McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, and Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2," (March 2003), the NRC staff concluded that there were no safety concerns that would preclude license renewal, because the licensee had demonstrated the capability to manage the effects of plant aging. The NRC conducted inspections of the plants to verify information submitted by the licensee. Copies of these documents are available on the NRC Web site at this address:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications/mcguire-catawba.html> .

On February 14 of this year, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards -- an independent body of technical experts which advises the Commission -- issued its recommendation that the operating licenses for Catawba and McGuire be renewed. That recommendation is contained in "Report on the Safety Aspects of the License Renewal Application for the McGuire Nuclear Station Units 1 and 2 and the Catawba Nuclear Station Units 1 and 2." A copy of this document is available on the NRC Web site at this address:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/acrs/letters/2003/r2019.html> .

Petitions to intervene in the renewal were filed by the Nuclear Information and Resource Service and the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL). An Atomic Safety and Licensing Board assigned to consider those petitions determined the issues raised by the petitioners were either moot or inadmissible. Accordingly, the Board denied the petitions. BREDL has appealed to the Commission, which is reviewing the decision. Issuing the licenses does not affect the Commission's consideration of the appeal. If the appeal is successful, the plants' original licenses will be reinstated.

The Catawba and McGuire license renewals bring the total number of renewals to 23 reactor units. A complete listing of renewal applications can be found on the NRC's Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal/applications.html> .

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