



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 6, 2015

Jared M. Elgin
5530 Waterbury Pl.
Lake in the Hills, IL 60156

Dear Mr. Elgin:

On behalf of NRC Chairman Burns, I would like to thank you for the e-mail and for your interest in nuclear power.

In accordance with the NRC's statutory authority, our agency was established to independently oversee – but not promote – the commercial nuclear industry. The NRC's primary responsibility is to regulate the use of radioactive materials, which can benefit the country, while also protecting the American people and environment.

Currently, the NRC regulates 99 operating nuclear power plants in the United States (65 PWRs and 34 BWRs), which generate about 20 percent of our nation's electrical use. In addition, the Atomic Energy Act gives the NRC the sole authority for licensing civilian uses of nuclear materials.

This NRC's regulatory process has five main components: (1) developing regulations and guidance for our applicants and licensees, (2) licensing or certifying applicants to use nuclear materials or operate nuclear facilities or decommissioning that permits license termination, (3) overseeing licensee operations and facilities to ensure that licensees comply with safety requirements, (4) evaluating operational experience at licensed facilities or involving licensed activities, and (5) conducting research, holding hearings to address the concerns of parties affected by agency decisions, and obtaining independent reviews to support our regulatory decisions.

To address your questions regarding new reactor facilities, our process is to review applications submitted by prospective licensees, and (when appropriate) issue standard design certifications, early site permits, limited work authorizations, construction permits, operating licenses, and combined licenses. At present, the NRC anticipates that these activities may involve new light-water reactor (LWR) facilities in a variety of projected locations throughout the United States.

The NRC has worked with Congress to prepare for new reactor application activity and we currently have applications under review for licenses to build and operate new commercial reactors. We have a strong track record of conducting efficient, predictable licensing reviews

(completing approximately 1,500 licensing actions every year) while always focusing on maintaining public health and safety.

The NRC considers public involvement in the agency's activities to be a cornerstone of strong, fair regulation of the nuclear industry. Toward that end, our regulatory process provides a variety of opportunities for citizens to be heard. For example, we announce upcoming public meetings on our Web site to enable interested members of the public to participate. We also encourage public involvement in rulemaking, and we provide related information on our Rulemaking Dockets page. In addition, we provide opportunities for public involvement in hearings, as well as public information on hearing opportunities and license applications.

Hopefully, I have provided helpful information and addressed the issues you presented. Many of the topics you raise are not within the area of responsibility of the U.S. NRC, as we do not set the energy policy for the U.S. We encourage you to reach out to the Department of Energy at <http://energy.gov/contact-us> or your Congressional representative to voice an opinion about the energy mix or the use of nuclear power in this country.

Enclosed is a CD that contains NRC's 2014-2015 Information Digest. The Digest provides a summary of information about the NRC and the industries it regulates. I hope you find the Digest to be a good resource for general information on nuclear-related topics. Good luck in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

/RA/ Holly Harrington for

Eliot Brenner
Director, Office of Public Affairs