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Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, DC 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: www.nrc.gov

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ATOMIC SAFETY & LICENSING BOARD GRANTS PETITIONERS' REQUEST FOR HEARING ON CATAWBA, MCGUIRE LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety & Licensing Board has granted a request for a hearing on license renewal applications for the McGuire Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, and Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2. Duke Energy Corporation, operator of the four units, submitted the applications on June 13, 2001.

The Catawba nuclear facility is located 18 miles southwest of Charlotte, N.C., in York County, S.C. The current operating licenses expire on December 6, 2024, for Unit 1 and February 24, 2026, for Unit 2.

The McGuire nuclear facility is located 17 miles north-northwest of Charlotte, in Mecklenburg County. The operating license for Unit 1 expires on June 12, 2021, and the license for Unit 2 on March 3, 2023.

In its memorandum and order, the board said that the Nuclear Information Resource Service and Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League have standing to intervene in the license renewal application and have raised two - and possibly three - admissible contentions in their petitions.

The admissible contentions regard the anticipated use of plutonium mixed oxide (MOX) fuel at Catawba and McGuire, and station blackout risks for ice condenser containments. The board said it would ask the Commission to decide whether a third contention regarding terrorism risks should be admissible.

Any petitions for review of the board's decision must be filed by February 4. A telephone pre-hearing conference is scheduled for 3 p.m. on February 12 to address administrative matters.

The board's memorandum and order, as well as other documents relating to the license renewal application, are available through the NRC Public Document Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland; telephone: (301) 415-4737, or 1-800-397-4209.

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