



NRC NEWS

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NRC REVISES ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NORTH ANNA EARLY SITE PERMIT APPLICATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is revising its schedule for issuing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an Early Site Permit (ESP) at the North Anna site in Louisa County, Va., about 40 miles northwest of Richmond.

The ESP applicant, Dominion Nuclear North Anna, LLC, informed the NRC on Nov. 22 that it intends to supplement its application no later than Jan. 13, 2006, modifying the proposed cooling method for a potential third reactor at the North Anna site. Because of this late change to the ESP application, NRC staff will not issue a final EIS on Dec. 23 as initially scheduled. A new schedule for completing review of the EIS and the overall North Anna ESP will be determined once Dominion provides the revised application.

The ESP process allows an applicant to resolve certain safety and environmental issues related to siting prior to submitting an application to build a new nuclear power plant. An ESP denotes a site's suitability for construction and operation of a nuclear plant.

Dominion filed the North Anna application on Sep. 25, 2003. If approved, the permit would allow Dominion to reserve the site for up to 20 years. A future application for a construction permit or combined license at the North Anna site could then reference the ESP.

"We've stopped work on the affected portions of the EIS, but we'll continue working on the rest of the statement until the remaining portions are completed," said Dave Matthews, Director of the Division of New Reactor Licensing in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. "Substantially changing an application this late in the process requires us to make adjustments in our available resources."

The staff must complete its final Safety Evaluation Report and the EIS, the NRC's independent Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards must issue a report on the ESP application, and an NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel must conclude a hearing on the application before the Commission can reach a final conclusion on issuing the ESP.

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