



NRC NEWS

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NRC, DOE TO HOLD PUBLIC WORKSHOP FEB. 19-21 ON EXTENDED LIFE FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy (DOE) will host a joint public workshop Feb. 19 – 21 in Bethesda, Md., to discuss technical issues and research topics for potential extended operation of the nation's nuclear power plants beyond 60 years.

The nation's 104 operating light-water reactors were initially licensed to operate for 40 years. Under NRC regulations, utilities may apply to renew these licenses for an additional 20 years. To date, 48 reactor licenses have been renewed, and 11 other license renewal applications are under review.

As part of the license renewal process, an applicant must provide NRC an evaluation addressing the technical aspects of plant aging and describing the ways those effects will be managed. It must also evaluate the potential impact on the environment if the plant operates for another 20 years. The NRC reviews the application and verifies the safety evaluations through inspections and prepares its own environmental analysis.

NRC regulations do not limit the number of times a reactor license may be renewed. In anticipation of utilities seeking to extend the life of reactors beyond 60 years, the workshop will attempt to identify technical issues that may require resolution to support long-term operations, identify prioritized research areas, and identify appropriate roles for industry, the NRC and DOE in a collaborative effort to ensure safe, long-term reactor operation.

The workshop will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda, One Bethesda Metro Center, 7400 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda, Md. For a detailed agenda and registration, see the workshop Web site, <http://www.energetics.com/nrcdoefeb08>. For more information, contact C.E. Carpenter of the NRC Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research at (301) 415-7333.

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