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NRC Approves Power Uprate for Columbia Generating Station

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved a request by Energy Northwest to increase the generating capacity of Columbia Generating Station by 1.7 percent.

The NRC staff found that Energy Northwest could safely increase the reactor's output primarily through more accurate means of measuring feedwater flow. The staff determination was based on its review of Energy Northwest's evaluations showing that the plant's design can handle the increased power level.

The NRC safety evaluation of the proposed power uprate focused on several areas, including the nuclear steam supply system, instrumentation and control systems, electrical systems, accident evaluations, radiological consequences, fire protection, operations and training, testing, and technical specification changes. For added confidence in the analysis, the NRC staff also conducted independent calculations and evaluations of selected areas.

The power uprate for the Columbia Generating Station, located approximately 20 miles north-northeast of Pasco, Wash., will increase the generating capacity from approximately 1,190 to 1,210 megawatts electric. Energy Northwest intends to implement the uprate starting in May 2017.

The NRC [published a notice](#) about the power uprate application on Oct. 4, 2016, providing the public an opportunity to comment or request a hearing. No comments or hearing requests were received. The agency's [evaluation of the Columbia power uprate](#) is available through the NRC's ADAMS online document database.

Since the 1970s, NRC-approved uprates at U.S. commercial nuclear power plants have collectively added the equivalent of seven new reactors' worth of electrical generation to the power grid.