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NRC Seeks Comment on Proposed Rule to Certify NuScale Small Modular Reactor

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking comments on a proposed rule that would certify NuScale’s small modular reactor design for U.S. use.

The design certification process provides for early public participation and resolution of safety issues for proposed reactor designs. NRC certification, in the form of a final rule, means the design meets the agency’s applicable safety requirements. If an applicant for a nuclear power plant license references a certified design, the applicant need not submit safety information for the design. Instead, the license application and the NRC’s safety review would address the remaining safety issues for the proposed nuclear power plant.

The proposed rule describes the NuScale reactor in a “design control document,” which would be approved (incorporated by reference) in the design certification rule. The NRC has also prepared an environmental assessment of the design to support the rulemaking. The NRC invites public comments on the design control document and environmental assessment as part of this rulemaking. The comment deadline is Aug. 30. Comments can be submitted via email to rulemaking.comments@nrc.gov or through regulations.gov by searching under Docket ID NRC-2017-0029.

NuScale submitted an application on Dec. 31, 2016, to certify the company’s small modular reactor design for use in the United States. The design utilizes natural, “passive” processes such as convection and gravity in its operating systems and safety features, while producing approximately 600 megawatts of electricity. The SMR’s 12 modules, each producing 50 megawatts, are all submerged in a safety-related pool built below ground level.

The NRC has certified six other designs: the Advanced Boiling Water Reactor, System 80+, AP600, AP1000, the Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor and the APR1400. The agency is also continuing work on an application to renew the ABWR certification. More information about the [NuScale design review](#) can be found on the NRC’s website.