



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC PROPOSES TO REMOVE SOME FINANCIAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR REACTOR LICENSE RENEWAL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is proposing to amend its regulations to remove the requirement that power reactor licensees that are not electric utilities submit financial information in their license renewal applications. The NRC believes that its financial review processes conducted during initial licensing, license transfers or, as proposed in this rule, the transition from electric utility to non-electric-utility status, provide a sufficiently comprehensive framework to assess financial qualifications. The agency does not believe that the license renewal process is sufficiently unique to warrant a separate financial review.

Non-power reactor licensees are not affected by the proposed rule change and will continue to be required to submit financial qualifications information when applying for a license renewal.

Currently, NRC regulations do not require electric-utility applicants for initial operating licenses and the renewal of those licenses to submit financial qualifications information. The NRC removed this requirement in 1984, based on the premise that the ratemaking process ensures that an electric utility applying for a nuclear power plant license has the funds needed to operate the facility safely. However, non-electric-utilities, which do not participate in the ratemaking process, are required to submit information on financial qualifications to the NRC for an initial operating license, during license transfer and at the license renewal stage.

The Commission believes that current regulatory processes adequately ensure that non-electric-utilities are financially qualified before and after receiving a renewed license and that the NRC can detect any deterioration in a licensee's financial condition before it impacts public health and safety. Under these processes, applicants other than electric utilities are required to submit projections of revenues and expenses for the reactor being licensed for the first five years of operation, or transfer of a license. The NRC evaluation of the financial qualifications of an entity other than an electric utility applicant is based on the submitted five-year projections of income and expenses and on current information from financial rating service publications such as *Moody's* and *Value Line*.

In addition, the NRC proposes to create a Section 50.76, a requirement segregated from paragraph 50.33(f)(2), to its regulations in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which would require licensees that are transitioning from an electric utility to a non-electric-utility without going through license transfers to submit sufficient financial information to allow the NRC to determine whether the licensee remains financially qualified to conduct the activities authorized by the license.

The comment period for the proposed rule expires 75 days after publication of a *Federal Register* notice on this subject, expected shortly. Comments after then will be considered if practical to do so, but the Commission can only ensure consideration of comments received on or before this date.

Comments may be mailed to the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff. They may be delivered to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on federal workdays. They can also be submitted via the NRC's rulemaking web site, at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>.

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