



NRC NEWS

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AREVA APPLICATION TO CERTIFY EPR DESIGN AVAILABLE ON NRC WEBSITE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has made available the public version of a design certification application submitted by Areva for its Evolutionary Power Reactor (EPR) standard plant design.

Areva submitted the application and associated information Dec. 11, 2007. The application, minus proprietary or security-related details, will be available on the NRC Web site here: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-licensing/design-cert/epr.html> .

The EPR design is a nuclear power plant capable of producing about 1,600 megawatts of electricity. The plant, currently being licensed and built in Finland, includes four fully redundant sets of emergency cooling systems, a double-walled containment, and a "core catcher" for containment and cooling of core materials for severe accidents resulting in reactor vessel failure. It is designed for a 60-year operating life.

If the NRC certifies the EPR, a company applying for a license to build and operate a new nuclear power plant in the United States could choose to use the design and reference it in the application. Safety issues resolved within the scope of the design certification are not subject to litigation with respect to that individual license application, although site-specific design information and environmental impacts associated with building and operating the plant at a particular location could be litigated. NRC has certified four other standard reactor designs.

The staff is checking the application for completeness. If the staff finds the application acceptable, they will start their technical review and request any additional information they need. The staff will issue a Safety Evaluation Report after all technical and safety questions have been resolved. The NRC would then certify the design through an agency rulemaking, which includes an opportunity for public participation. The staff expects this process to continue through the year 2011.

The NRC's regulations describe the certification process in Subpart B of Part 52, available on the agency's Web site here: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/cfr/part052/> .

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