

No: 13-077

September 12, 2013

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NRC Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Rule and Environmental Study of Extended Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a proposed rule and supporting environmental study on the effects of extended storage of spent nuclear fuel beyond the licensed operating life of commercial reactors.

The proposed rule will be published tomorrow in the *Federal Register*. The public comment period will last for 75 days, through Nov. 27.

The proposed rule, known as “waste confidence,” would replace a similar provision in NRC’s environmental regulations that was vacated last year by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The rule does not authorize extended storage of spent fuel at reactor sites – a separate license is required for that. Rather, waste confidence is a generic finding of the environmental impacts of storing spent fuel for extended periods beyond the licensed operating life of reactors. The draft Waste Confidence Generic Environmental Impact Statement forms the regulatory basis for the proposed rule. The draft statement was distributed Sept. 6 and is available on the NRC’s [waste confidence webpage](#). The proposed rule will also be available on this page following publication.

Previous versions of the proposed rule and draft statement were made publicly available in July. The current versions incorporate additional material and editorial changes directed by the Commission in a [Staff Requirements Memorandum](#) dated Aug. 5.

Public comments may be submitted several ways: Online through the federal government’s rulemaking website, www.regulations.gov using Docket ID NRC-2012-0246; by e-mail to Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov; by fax to 301-415-1101; by mail to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff; or by hand delivery to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md., between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on federal workdays.

Comments may also be provided orally or in writing at one of 12 public meetings the NRC staff will hold around the country in October and November, part of the agency’s extensive public outreach effort on the waste confidence project. Details of these meetings are available on the NRC’s [waste confidence webpage](#). All comments will be considered no matter how they are submitted.