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NRC Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Rule for Decommissioning Nuclear Power Plants

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a [proposed rule](#) to amend agency regulations for nuclear power plants transitioning from operations to decommissioning.

The proposed rule was published today in the Federal Register. Comments will be accepted for 75 days, through May 17. The proposed rule and related documents are also available on the NRC [website](#), with information about upcoming public meetings to present the proposed rule and receive public comments. Two online public meetings will be held March 21 at 1 p.m., Eastern time and March 31 at 4 p.m., Eastern time. Additional public meetings may be added during the comment period.

Current NRC regulations establish safety requirements for the commercial operation of nuclear power plants. These regulations do not have separate requirements for the significantly lower safety hazards associated with a permanently shut down and defueled reactor undergoing decommissioning. As a result, the NRC has allowed incremental changes to various requirements, including emergency preparedness, through exemptions and license amendments. The proposed rule would implement specific regulatory requirements for different phases of the decommissioning process, consistent with the reduced risk.

The proposed regulation would incorporate lessons learned from plants that have recently transitioned to decommissioning and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the regulatory framework.

“NRC maintains its rigorous oversight of the decommissioning process from start to finish. said NRC Chairman Christopher T. Hanson. “Seeking and reviewing public comments will further inform the development of the rule to ensure it is protective of public health and safety.”

When the Commission approved the rule in November, Hanson emphasized the importance of public participation in the rulemaking process, noting that the agency sought public comment twice in the years the proposed rule was under development.

Comments can be submitted over the federal government’s rulemaking website, www.regulations.gov, using Docket ID NRC-2015-0070; sent by email to Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov; or directly mailed to Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff.