



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, DC 20555-0001 E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. 02-080

July 2, 2002

NRC ACCEPTS APPLICATION FOR DESIGN CERTIFICATION OF WESTINGHOUSE AP1000 ADVANCED REACTOR DESIGN

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has accepted a design certification application submitted by the Westinghouse Electric Company for its AP1000 standard plant design after determining that it contains sufficient information to be formally “docketed” and processed.

The AP1000 design is a nuclear power plant capable of producing about 1,100 megawatts of electricity. The plant features enhanced safety systems that rely on gravity and natural processes to safely shut down the reactor or mitigate the effects of an accident. It is designed for a 60-year operating life.

If certification is granted, a company that wished to build and operate a new nuclear power plant could choose to use the design and reference it in a license 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 three other standard reactor designs.

In submitting its application for design certification on March 28, Westinghouse referenced the AP600 standard design, which was certified by NRC in 1999. It made changes necessitated by the requirements of the larger size of the AP1000. Additional details are available in a notice published in the Federal Register on June 28.

The staff will now start to review the application, request any additional information if necessary, and then issue a draft Safety Evaluation Report to address any technical and safety questions. A final Safety Evaluation Report will be issued when all technical and safety questions have been resolved. The design can then be certified through NRC's rulemaking process, which includes an opportunity for public participation. The certification process is described in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 52, Subpart B.

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