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NRC Approves License Renewal for Honeywell Uranium Conversion Facility

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has renewed the operating license of Honeywell International's uranium conversion plant in Metropolis, Ill., for an additional 40 years. The new license expires on March 24, 2060.

Uranium conversion is an important step in the nuclear fuel cycle. Honeywell receives uranium oxide from mills and in-situ recovery facilities and converts it to uranium hexafluoride. The UF₆ is then transported to other facilities, where it is enriched and subsequently made into fuel for use in commercial nuclear power reactors.

Honeywell submitted its license renewal application in February 2017. In its review, the NRC staff focused on Honeywell's decommissioning funding, the environmental effects of the facility for the duration of the license, facility changes and safety basis, and the controls to monitor material degradation and aging for the duration of a license term. The staff concluded that renewing the license would not pose an undue risk to public health and safety and would not significantly affect the quality of the environment. The staff's review is documented in a final safety evaluation report, published this month, and an environmental assessment published in October 2019.

The facility is currently in a "ready-idle" status with a reduced amount of material on site.