

N82. NRC decision on level of detail for advanced reactors

The NRC's effort to define how much design detail will be needed to have an advanced nuclear plant certified by the agency and what constitutes an "essentially complete" advanced reactor design took an important step as the commissioners unanimously endorsed an approach they believe will ensure safety and foster standardization, while giving vendors sufficient flexibility to design and build plants.

The commission adopted a staff recommendation to take a "graded approach" to the level of detail required. The level of detail for certification review will vary depending on the system's or structure's relationship to safety. The agency's staff will decide when sufficient information is available to make the necessary safety determination. Because the staff is constrained from requiring changes to the certified design, it is likely that the staff will adopt a conservative approach to the reviews.

The industry is reacting positively to the NRC commissioner's decision.

For more, see Nucleonics Week, p. 9, February 28, 1991.