

## **The License Renewal Process for Nuclear Power Reactors**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 authorizes the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to issue commercial nuclear power plant operating licenses for up to 40 years and permits the renewal of the licenses as well. NRC regulations allow for the renewal of these operating licenses for up to an additional 20 years, depending on the outcome of safety and environmental reviews. There are no specific limitations in the Atomic Energy Act or the NRC's regulations restricting the number of times a license may be renewed.

In 1986, the NRC initiated a program to develop license renewal regulations and associated regulatory guidance in anticipation of receiving applications for the renewal of nuclear power plant operating licenses. In 1996, the NRC published a final rule which amended the environmental protection regulations in 10 CFR Part 51 for applicants seeking to renew an operating license for up to an additional 20 years. The 1996 final rule was based upon the analyses and findings of a May 1996 NRC environmental impact statement, "Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants," NUREG-1437

The license renewal process is designed to assure safe operation of the nuclear power plant and protection of the environment during the license renewal term. Under the NRC's environmental protection regulations in Title 10, Part 51, of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR Part 51), which implement Section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), renewal of a nuclear power plant operating license requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

This presentation will provide an overview of the license renewal process with an emphasis on the radiological review.

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