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NRC Renews License for Dry Spent Fuel Storage Facility at Calvert Cliffs

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved a 40-year license renewal for Exelon Generation's dry-cask independent spent fuel storage installation at the Calvert Cliffs nuclear power plant in Lusby, Md.

The license now has an expiration date of Nov. 30, 2052. The initial 20-year license would have expired Nov. 30, 2012, but Exelon submitted a request to renew it in 2010. This meant the facility was considered to be in "timely renewal," where the license would not expire as long as the NRC staff was reviewing the request. This allowed the Calvert Cliffs' independent spent fuel storage installation to continue to operate under its existing license until the NRC completed its safety and security review and reached a decision on the license renewal application.

The renewed license, the fifth the NRC has issued for a dry cask storage facility, contains conditions requiring periodic inspections of the casks and their components to ensure potential aging effects are identified and managed. These conditions require Exelon to take corrective action to address findings that could prevent a cask component from performing its safety function.

"We are confident that Calvert Cliffs' dry cask storage systems meet the NRC's strict standards and will be able to store spent fuel safely over the extended period of the renewed license," said Mark Lombard, Director of the NRC's Division of Spent Fuel Management. "In addition, inspections by the licensee and the NRC will ensure that effects from aging will not affect the casks' ability to protect the public and the environment."

There are now 71 independent spent fuel storage facilities in the United States. Spent fuel is moved into NRC-approved dry casks after an appropriate time of cooling in a spent fuel pool. Plants implement dry storage when their spent fuel pools are at or near capacity.