

PPL Susquehanna Plans to Apply for Nuclear Power Plant License Renewal

PRNewswire

BERWICK, Pa., Jan. 23 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- PPL Susquehanna has notified the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that it intends to seek renewal of its operating license for the Susquehanna nuclear plant in Berwick, Pa., company officials announced today. If the NRC approves PPL's application, the plant's operating license would be extended by 20 years.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PHTH025>)

"The Susquehanna plant has established a safe and reliable operation through a highly qualified workforce and comprehensive programs to ensure the long-term reliability of the plant's equipment," said Herbert D. Woodeshick, special assistant to the president. "Not only does the Susquehanna plant help ensure efficient, reliable electric service with minimal impact on the environment, but also it is an integral part of the community."

The Susquehanna plant employs about 1,100 people full time and is the largest taxpayer in Luzerne County. Plant workers participate in civic and business organizations, serve in public offices, contribute thousands of dollars to charitable campaigns, and volunteer in public services.

The plant has two boiling water reactors, each with more than 1,100 megawatts of generating capacity. The current operating licenses will expire in July 2022 and March 2024 for Units 1 and 2, respectively, but those terms would be extended to 2042 and 2044 if the NRC approves PPL's application.

Because the review process takes about two years, the NRC has requested that plant owners file early notification of their plans to apply. PPL's letter of intent to the federal agency states that the company plans to file a license renewal application in 2005.

License renewal requires proof that the plant can operate safely. The plant must also demonstrate that it can manage any maintenance issues related to aging equipment. A nuclear plant that has its license renewed can get a maximum 20-year extension on its operating license, during which time it will continue to be monitored by the NRC.

"All nuclear power plants applying for license renewal must pass a comprehensive and thorough safety review by the NRC," Woodeshick said. "Licensing establishes safety standards and only allows a plant to operate as long as it can meet those standards."

Nuclear energy provides more than 30 percent of the electricity produced in Pennsylvania and about 20 percent nationwide.

U.S. nuclear power plants initially were given a 40-year operating license. To date, 50 of the nation's 103 operating commercial nuclear reactors are committed to license renewal. Since April 1998, 22 units have submitted applications for license renewal, 14 of which are in the review process and eight of which have been approved. Another 28 units have notified the NRC of their intent to submit applications.

Nuclear power accounts for roughly 20 percent of PPL's nearly 10,000- megawatt generation business. The Susquehanna plant is operated and 90 percent owned by PPL Susquehanna LLC, a subsidiary of PPL Corporation. Allegheny Electric Cooperative Inc. owns the remaining 10 percent. Unit 1 began commercial operations in June 1983, and Unit 2 joined it in February 1985.

Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) controls or owns more than 10,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, markets energy in select U.S. states and Canada, and delivers electricity to nearly 6 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

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