

Platts Nuclear News

*** WCS seeks license from NRC for consolidated spent fuel storage

Low-level radioactive waste management company Waste Control Specialists submitted an application to NRC April 28 for a license to operate a facility in west Texas for interim storage of spent nuclear fuel, starting with that at shut reactor sites.

The company expects NRC will take three years to review the application, and hopes to begin accepting the first spent fuel at the facility in 2021, WCS President and CEO Rod Baltzer said during a news conference in Washington April 28.

The US government dismantled a project to dispose of spent fuel in a geologic repository at Nevada's Yucca Mountain, citing in part the state's unyielding opposition to the facility. DOE has since proposed a consent-based program to develop one or more consolidated interim storage facilities and repositories.

The initial plan is to accept spent fuel from reactors that have been permanently shut, WCS said.

The application covers as much as 40,000 metric tons of heavy metal of spent fuel for an initial 40-year period, with opportunities for 20-year renewals, WCS said in a statement.

The application was developed with Areva and NAC International, two of the largest vendors of spent nuclear fuel dry cask storage and transportation systems. Their involvement comes because they developed the casks originally used to store the spent fuel at locations where permanently closed reactors have been dismantled, Baltzer said.

NRC is reviewing the application to see whether it contains enough technical information to begin a formal safety and environmental review, Mark Lombard, director of the division of spent fuel management, said in a blog post April 28.