



NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 52-055, NRC-2025-2161]

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC; Belews Creek, North Carolina Site, Early Site Permit, Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Process and Prepare Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice; request for comment.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) announces its intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (DEC) application for an Early Site Permit (ESP) for the Belews Creek, NC, site in Sauratown Township, Stokes County, North Carolina, and Belews Creek Township, Forsyth County, North Carolina. The NRC is initiating a 30-day public scoping period to gather input on the scope of the EIS. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency, while the NRC will be the lead Federal agency.

DATES: The public may submit comments on the scope of the EIS by June 8, 2026. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date. Further information regarding the proposed applications can be found in Section V of this notice, "Virtual Project Information and Engagement."

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods; however, the NRC encourages electronic comment submission through the **Federal rulemaking website:**

- **Federal rulemaking website:** Go to <https://regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2025-2161. Address questions about Docket IDs in [Regulations.gov](https://regulations.gov) to

Bridget Curran; telephone: 301-415-1003; email: Bridget.Curran@nrc.gov. For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the “For Further Information Contact” section of this document.

- **Email:** Comments may be submitted to the NRC electronically using the email address BelewsCreekEnvironmental@nrc.gov.
- **Mail comments to:** Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWFN-5-A85, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, ATTN: Program Management, Announcements and Editing Staff.

For additional direction on obtaining information and submitting comments, see “Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments” in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William Burris, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-1621; email: William.Burris@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments

A. Obtaining Information

Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2025-2161 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may obtain publicly available information related to this document using any of the following methods:

- **Federal rulemaking website:** Go to <https://regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2025-2161.

- **NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):** You may obtain publicly available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select “Begin ADAMS Public Search.” For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC’s Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, at 301-415-4737, or by email to PDR.resource@nrc.gov. The ADAMS accession number

for each document referenced in this document (if it is available in ADAMS) is provided the first time that it is referenced.

- **NRC's PDR:** The PDR, where you may examine and order copies of publicly available documents, is open by appointment. To make an appointment to visit the PDR, please send an email to PDR.Resource@nrc.gov or call 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

- **NRC Public Project Website:** Information regarding the project and engagement opportunities, is available at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/advanced/who-were-working-with/applicant-projects/dukeenergy>.

- The NRC encourages electronic comment submission through the **Federal rulemaking website** (<https://www.regulations.gov>). Please include Docket ID NRC-2025-2161 in the subject line of your comment submission in order to ensure that the NRC is able to make your comment submission available to the public in this docket.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. The NRC will post all comment submissions at <https://www.regulations.gov> as well as enter the comment submissions into ADAMS. The NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the NRC, then you should inform those persons not to include identifying or contact information that they do not want to be publicly disclosed in their comment submission. Your request should state that the NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment into ADAMS.

II. Discussion

By letter dated December 30, 2025, (ADAMS Package Accession No. ML25364A004), DEC submitted to the NRC in accordance with part 52 of title 10 of the

Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR), Subpart A, “Early Site Permits (ESP),” an application for an ESP to approve the Belews Creek, NC, site for future construction of multiple nuclear reactors. DEC has not selected a reactor technology to be built at the project site and used a plant parameter envelope approach. This submission initiated the NRC’s proposed action of determining whether to grant the ESP.

In accordance with 10 CFR 51.50(a), DEC submitted an environmental report (ER) as part of the ESP application. The ER was prepared pursuant to 10 CFR part 51 and is publicly available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML25364A006. The ER will also be available for viewing at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/advanced/who-were-working-with/applicant-projects/dukeenergy>.

The ER includes a discussion of the purpose of the project and alternatives.

The NRC staff determined that DEC submitted an application in accordance with 10 CFR part 52, and that the application is acceptable for docketing under Docket No. 52-055. The NRC sent a letter of acceptance and docketing to DEC on February 8, 2026, (ADAMS Accession No. ML26016A624). A notice of acceptance for docketing of the application and notice of hearing were published in the *Federal Register* on February 9, 2025, (91 FR 5787). These notices are available on the Federal rulemaking website (<https://www.regulations.gov>) by searching for Docket ID NRC-2025-2161.

The NRC is the lead Federal agency for the NEPA process for the proposed action. The NRC may invite any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal to become cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS for the proposed action. As such, the U.S Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency.

The Council for Environmental Quality Identification for this EIS is EISX-429-00-000-1773367293.

III. Request for Comment

This notice informs the public of the NRC’s intent to conduct environmental

scoping and prepare an EIS for the NRC's review of the ESP application for Belews Creek, NC, site and to provide the public an opportunity to participate in the environmental scoping process, in accordance with 10 CFR 51.29, "Scoping-environmental impact statement and supplement to environmental impact statement," and 10 CFR 51.116, "Notice of intent."

The regulations in 36 CFR 800.8, "Coordination with the National Environmental Policy Act," allow agencies to use their NEPA process to fulfill the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101, et seq.) (NHPA). Therefore, pursuant to 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC intends to use its process and documentation required for the preparation of the EIS on the proposed action to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA, in lieu of the procedures set forth at 36 CFR 800.3 through 800.6.

The NRC intends to gather the information necessary to prepare an EIS related to the ESP application for the Belews Creek, NC, site. The NRC is required by 10 CFR 51.20(b) to prepare an EIS in connection with the issuance of an ESP for a power reactor. This notice is being published in accordance with NEPA and the NRC's regulations at 10 CFR Part 51.

The NRC will evaluate the environmental impacts of construction, operation and decommissioning of a nuclear power facility at the Belews Creek, NC, site, and alternatives thereto.

As part of its environmental review, the NRC will first conduct a scoping process and, as soon as practicable thereafter, will prepare a draft EIS for public comment. Participation in this scoping process by members of the public and local, State, Tribal, and Federal government agencies is encouraged. The scoping process for the draft EIS will be used to accomplish the following:

- a. Define the proposed action that is to be the subject of the EIS;
- b. Determine the scope of the EIS and identify the significant issues to be analyzed in depth;

- c. Identify and eliminate from detailed study those issues that are peripheral or are not significant or that have been covered by prior environmental review;
- d. Identify any environmental assessments and other EISs that are being or will be prepared that are related to, but are not part of, the scope of the EIS under consideration;
- e. Identify other environmental review and consultation requirements related to the proposed action;
- f. Indicate the relationship between the timing of the preparation of the environmental analyses and the NRC's tentative planning and decision-making schedule;
- g. Identify any cooperating agencies and, as appropriate, allocate assignments for preparation and schedules for completing the EIS to the NRC and any cooperating agencies; and
- h. Describe how the EIS will be prepared, including any contractor assistance to be used.

The NRC invites the following entities to participate in scoping:

- a. The applicant, Duke Energy Carolina, LLC;
- b. Any Federal agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved or that is authorized to develop and enforce relevant environmental standards;
- c. Affected State and local government agencies, including those authorized to develop and enforce relevant environmental standards;
- d. Any affected Indian Tribe;
- e. Any person who requests or has requested an opportunity to participate in the scoping process; and
- f. Any person who has petitioned or intends to petition for leave to intervene under 10 CFR 2.309.

IV. Virtual Project Information and Engagement

The NRC is announcing that it will maintain project information and engagement opportunities for the DEC Belews Creek ESP application located at the NRC project website at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/advanced/who-were-working-with/applicant-projects/dukeenergy>. Project information and stakeholder engagement will include: (1) an overview by the NRC of the environmental review process, the proposed scope of the DEC Belews Creek project, and the proposed environmental review schedule; and (2) information regarding the opportunity for interested government agencies, organizations, and individuals to submit comments or suggestions on environmental issues or the proposed scope of the EIS.

Participation in the scoping process for the Belews Creek ESP EIS does not entitle participants to become parties to the proceeding to which the EIS relates. Matters related to participation in any hearing are outside the scope of matters to be discussed as part of the EIS process.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2011 *et seq.*

Dated: April 23, 2026.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Daniel Barnhurst,
Chief,
Environmental Project Management Branch,
Division of Rulemaking, Environmental,
and Financial Support,
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 2026-08155 Filed: 4/24/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 4/27/2026]