



NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 050-616 and 050-617; NRC-2026-0265]

Palisades SMR, LLC; Pioneer Units 1 and 2; Phased Construction Permit Application; Limited Work Authorization; Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Process and Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice; request for comment.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act 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 a phased construction permit (CP) application, including a request for a limited work authorization submitted by SMR, LLC on behalf of Palisades SMR, LLC (Palisades SMR), for a dual-unit SMR-300 plant, Pioneer Units 1 and 2, at the Palisades Energy Center in Covert, Michigan. The NRC is initiating a 30-day public scoping period to gather input on the scope of the EIS and invites public comments to identify potential alternatives, environmental concerns, relevant information and analysis, and specific issues to be addressed in 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 **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]**. 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 project can be found in Section V of this document, “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-2026-0265. Address questions about Docket IDs in 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 to:** PioneerEnvironmental@nrc.gov.
- **Mail comments to:** Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWFN-05-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: Robert Hoffman, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001; telephone: 301-415-1107; email: Robert.Hoffman@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments

A. Obtaining Information

Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2026-0265 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information for this action. You may obtain publicly available information related to this action by any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Website:** Go to <https://regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2026-0265.

- **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 (if it is available in ADAMS) is provided the first time that it is mentioned in this document.

- **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.

- **Public Library:** A copy of Part 1 of the phased CP application, including the environmental report, is available for public review at the following public library locations: South Haven Memorial Library, 314 Broadway Street, South Haven, MI 49090 and St. Joseph/Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library, 500 Market Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085.

- **NRC Public Project Website:** Information regarding the project is available at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/advanced/who-were-working-with/applicant-projects/pioneer>. For information related to the environmental review and engagement opportunities for scoping, click on the "Environmental Impact Statement" link.

B. Submitting Comments

The NRC encourages electronic comment submission through the Federal rulemaking website (<https://www.regulations.gov>). Please include Docket ID NRC-2026-0265 in 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. Background

On December 31, 2025, SMR, LLC submitted the first part (Part 1) of a phased construction permit (CP) application under section 2.101(a)(9) of title 10 of the *Code Federal Regulations* (CFR) for a dual-unit SMR-300 plant, Pioneer Units 1 and 2, which will be co-located with the Palisades Nuclear Plant at the Palisades Energy Center in Covert, MI (ADAMS Package Accession No. ML25365A983). Part 1 of the phased CP application was submitted by SMR, LLC on behalf of Palisades SMR, LLC (Palisades SMR or applicant). Palisades SMR will be the owner of the proposed Pioneer Units 1 and 2, and Palisades Energy, LLC is expected to operate these units. Palisades SMR and Palisades Energy, LLC are both wholly-owned, indirect subsidiaries of Holtec International. Each unit is an SMR-300, which is an advanced pressurized light water reactor designed by SMR, LLC.

The phased CP application is for a utilization facility pursuant to Section 103 of the Atomic Energy Act and 10 CFR part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities." Part 1 of the phased CP application includes a limited work authorization (LWA) request pursuant to 10 CFR 50.10(d), "Request for limited work authorization;" exemption requests, and a comprehensive environmental report (ER). The applicant stated that the comprehensive ER meets the requirements of 10 CFR 51.49(f) and 10 CFR 51.50(a), and addresses the impacts associated with LWA activities, the remainder of construction to complete the plant, and plant operations. Additionally, the applicant stated that Part 2 of the phased CP application will be filed no later than 18 months after the Part 1 submittal.

The NRC acknowledged receipt of the application in a *Federal Register* notice published on January 22, 2026 (91 FR 2803). The NRC determined that Part 1 of the phased CP application was acceptable for docketing on February 13, 2026 (ADAMS Accession No. ML26041A223) and published a notice of acceptance for docketing, opportunity to request hearing a petition for leave to intervene, and request for comment on February 27, 2026 (91 FR 9892).

In accordance with 10 CFR 51.76(b) and 51.76(f), the NRC staff will prepare a single comprehensive environmental impact statement (EIS) that analyzes the environmental impacts from construction, operation and decommissioning of Pioneer Units 1 and 2.

III. Discussion

Proposed Action

The proposed Federal action, for the purpose of the EIS development, is the NRC's decision on whether to issue an LWA and CP to the applicant for the proposed dual-unit SMR-300 plant, Pioneer Units 1 and 2. The proposed Federal action would authorize, in sequence, specific phases of the plant's construction. Issuance of an LWA under 10 CFR 50.10(d) would allow limited NRC authorized construction activities to begin prior to the issuance of the CP, including soil improvement within the excavation and installation of certain foundations. Issuance of the CP would authorize full construction of the two SMR-300 units. The proposed action represents the first step in a two-step licensing process for new nuclear power plants, with a potential subsequent application for an operating license to follow.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

As discussed in the ER, the purpose and need of the proposed two-unit SMR-300 facility would be to provide baseload energy generation to be supplied to the regional power grid. Together the two units are expected to produce approximately 680 megawatts electric net of baseload generation capacity. The purpose and need include: (1) providing electricity to meet growing electricity demand; (2) providing a baseload

generating source; and (3) providing new electrical power generation consistent with Michigan's and the nation's energy goals.

Preliminary Alternatives

The draft EIS will evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives that are technically and economically feasible and that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action. The NRC staff is currently evaluating potential alternatives for Pioneer Units 1 and 2 to determine which alternatives will be carried forward for detailed evaluation. At a minimum, the No-Action Alternative will be carried forward for full analysis. Under the No-Action Alternative, the NRC would not issue the LWA and CP for the construction of Pioneer Units 1 and 2.

Summary of Expected Impacts

The draft EIS will identify, describe and analyze the potential environmental effects of the proposed action and a range of reasonable alternatives. Environmental resources that are determined to be potentially affected will be carried forward for full analysis.

Potential impacts on resources include reasonably foreseeable environmental effects (whether beneficial or adverse; short term or long term) on air quality; geology; water resources, including surface and groundwater; ecological resources, including terrestrial and aquatic; land use; socioeconomics; radiological and nonradiological health and waste; uranium fuel cycle; decommissioning; cultural resources; and transportation of fuel.

Once the NRC completes its review of the applicant's comprehensive ER, it will publish the draft EIS in a future *Federal Register* notice for governmental agency and public review and comment. Persons who provide their email contact information when submitting comments during the scoping process will receive a copy of the draft EIS. In addition, copies of the draft EIS will be available for public inspection on the NRC's website and at the PDR as mentioned in the "Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments" section of this document. Others who would like to receive a copy when the

EIS is issued should notify the NRC per the “For Further Information Contact” section of this document.

NEPA Lead and Cooperating Agency Roles

The NRC is the lead Federal agency preparing the EIS in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. §4321, et seq.). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to be a cooperating agency supporting development on the EIS. The NRC may also invite other Federal agencies, or State, Tribal, or local agencies of similar qualifications to become cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS for the proposed action. For purposes of NEPA, a cooperating agency means any Federal agency (and a State, Tribal, or local agency with agreement of the lead agency) that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal or a reasonable alternative.

Anticipated Permits, Authorizations, and Consultations

Federal permits, authorizations, or consultations may be required for the proposed actions, including consultation or review under the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.; National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. §300101 et seq.; Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments); consistency review under the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. §1451 et seq.; and possibly reviews under other laws and regulations determined to be applicable to the proposed action. To the extent possible, the draft EIS will concurrently integrate analyses required by other Federal environmental review requirements. The draft EIS will list all Federal permits, licenses, and other authorizations that must be obtained in implementing the proposed action.

Specific to NHPA, the regulations in 36 CFR 800.8, “Coordination with the National Environmental Policy Act,” allow agencies to use the NEPA process to fulfill the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA, as amended (54 U.S.C. §300101, et seq.). Therefore, pursuant to 36 CFR 800.8(c), the NRC intends to use its NEPA 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.

IV. Request for Comment

This notice informs the public of the NRC's intention, as the lead Federal agency, to conduct environmental scoping and prepare an EIS related to the phased CP application for Pioneer Units 1 and 2 and provides the public with an opportunity to participate in the environmental scoping process. The NRC considers stakeholder engagement and transparency in its activities to be cornerstones for effective regulation.

The NRC intends to gather the information necessary to prepare an EIS related to the phased CP application for Pioneer Units 1 and 2. This notice is being published in accordance with NEPA and the NRC's regulations in 10 CFR part 51.

As part of its environmental review, the NRC will first conduct a scoping process for the EIS and, as soon as practicable thereafter, will publish 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 other environmental assessments and EISs that have been, are being, or will be prepared that are related to, but are not part of, the scope of the proposed action;
- e. Identify other environmental review and consultation requirements related to the proposed action;
- f. Identify parties consulting with the NRC under the NHPA, as set forth in 36 CFR 800.8(c)(1)(i);

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 applicant and contractor participation.

In accordance with 10 CFR 51.28, "Scoping—participants," the NRC invites the following entities to participate in scoping:

- a. The applicant, Palisades SMR, 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 Native American 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.

The scoping process allows the public and interested parties to shape the EIS impact analysis, focusing on the areas of greatest importance and identifying areas requiring less attention. Comments may be broad in nature or focused on specific areas of concern, but should be directly relevant to the proposed Federal action, the NEPA process, or expected resource impacts. Comments should discuss potential cause and effect relationships with the proposed Federal action and assist in defining the scope of analyses. Particularly, it would be helpful for comments to provide the specific aspect of the action that may have an effect and the specific aspect of the resource that may be affected.

V. Virtual Project Information and Engagement

The NRC is announcing that it will maintain project information for the environmental review and engagement opportunities for the Pioneer Units 1 and 2 project on the NRC public website by clicking on the “Environmental Impact Statement” link located on the project homepage at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/new-reactors/advanced/who-were-working-with/applicant-projects/pioneer>. Project and engagement information will include: (1) information including an overview by the NRC of the environmental review process, the proposed scope of the environmental review, and the proposed 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 Pioneer Units 1 and 2 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: June 10, 2026.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Daniel Barnhurst,
*Chief,
Environmental Project Management
Branch 3,
Division of Rulemaking, Environmental,
and Financial Support,
Office of Nuclear Material Safety,
and Safeguards.*