



OTHER Published October 16, 2023 · 2 minute read

Fact Sheet: 5 Actions to Watch on NRC Modernization & Advanced Reactors



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Advanced reactors are critical to meeting our decarbonization targets and making the United States energy independent, but, despite being the country that put nuclear energy on the map, the US is trailing Russia and China in deploying this critical technology.

To meet our climate goals, the US must deploy 20 advanced reactor plants by 2035. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) holds the keys to get it done.

Though many advocates have been focused on much-needed Congressional action, the NRC can take several agency-level actions today that will speed the deployment of advanced nuclear and help us reach our climate goals.

Third Way's newest memo outlines 5 ongoing NRC activities to watch that are critical for the future of advanced reactors in the US. **We've got a snapshot of three key NRC efforts here, and you'll find a link to the full memo with all our insights below.**

1. Improved Reactor Licensing

The NRC is amending existing regulations for new reactor licensing to make them more consistent, effective, technology-inclusive, and risk-informed. This rulemaking will implement procedural and safety-related changes

that could increase efficiency and help more companies come to market, impacting the landscape for advanced reactor licensing over the next decade. The proposed draft rule awaits action from the Commission.

2. More Efficient NEPA Reviews

The NRC is working to change its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews to maximize efficiency for advanced reactors. The new process will implement a technology-neutral framework and use performance-based assumptions to determine environmental impacts. These changes will streamline the NEPA review process for future advanced reactor applications, speeding deployment while maintaining the environmental protections NEPA provides. The proposed draft rule awaits a vote from the Commission.

3. Developing New Regulations

Under the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (NEIMA), Congress mandated the development of a comprehensive licensing framework for advanced reactors based on technology-inclusive, risk-informed, and performance-based principles. The NRC was slated to deliver this final rule by December 31st, 2027, but, in response to industry demand, the NRC accelerated the timeline and plans to offer the new rule by the end of 2025. Once finalized, the rule should provide a more efficient and effective licensing path for a broad range of advanced reactor technologies.

Want to take a deeper dive into NRC modernization? Read our full memo on the near-term NRC activities that are critical to the development and deployment of advanced reactors [here](#).

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