

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. STN 50-456, STN 50-457, 72-73, STN 50-454, STN 50-455, 72-68, 50-373, 50-374, and 72-70; CEQ ID: EAXX-429-00-000-1774341782; NRC-2026-1651]

### Constellation Energy Generation, LLC; Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2, Byron Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2, and LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of exemptions in response to the November 7, 2025, request from Constellation Energy Generation, LLC (the licensee) related to Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2 (Braidwood), Byron Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2 (Byron), and LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2 (LaSalle), located in Will County, Ogle County, and LaSalle County, respectively, in Illinois. The exemptions would allow the licensee to transfer certain earnings from the Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle nuclear decommissioning trusts (NDTs) to subaccounts within the NDTs that may then be used to pay for activities related to the larger decommissioning process and during operations. The NRC staff is issuing an environmental assessment (EA) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) associated with the proposed exemptions.

**DATES:** The EA and FONSI referenced in this document are available on April 21, 2026.

**ADDRESSES:** Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2026-1651 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://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2026-1651. Address questions about Docket IDs in *Regulations.gov* to Bridget Curran; telephone: 301-415-1003; email: [Bridget.Curran@nrc.gov](mailto:Bridget.Curran@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the "For Further Information Contact" section of this document.

- *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](mailto: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](mailto:PDR.Resource@nrc.gov) or call 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. eastern time (ET), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Luis O. Cruz Rosado, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-4106; email: [Luis.CruzRosado@nrc.gov](mailto:Luis.CruzRosado@nrc.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Introduction

The NRC is considering issuance of exemptions from the requirements in paragraphs 50.82(a)(8)(i), 50.82(a)(8)(ii), and 50.75(h)(1)(iv) of title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) to the licensee for Renewed Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-72, NPF-77, NPF-37, NPF-66, NPF-11, and NPF-18 for Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle, respectively. By letter dated November 7, 2025 (ADAMS Accession No. ML25311A143), and pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12, "Specific exemptions," the licensee requested exemptions to allow the licensee to transfer certain earnings from the Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle NDTs to subaccounts within the NDTs that could then be used for activities related to the larger decommissioning process (not just to radiological decommissioning activities) and during operations, including spent fuel management activities associated with the onsite independent spent fuel storage installations under the general licenses in 10 CFR part 72.

In accordance with 10 CFR 51.21 and 10 CFR 51.30, the NRC prepared the following EA that analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed action. Based on the results of this EA, which is provided in section II of this document, and in accordance with 10 CFR 51.31(a), the NRC has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action and is issuing a FONSI.

##### II. Environmental Assessment

###### *Description of the Proposed Action*

Exemptions from 10 CFR 50.82(a)(8)(i) and 10 CFR 50.75(h)(1)(iv) would allow the licensee to use funds from the NDT subaccounts for activities that are not exclusively consistent with the NRC's definition of decommissioning in 10 CFR 50.2, such as spent fuel management and site restoration. Exemptions from 10 CFR 50.82(a)(8)(ii) would allow the licensee to use these funds for these activities prior to the facilities' permanent cessations of operations. The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated November 7, 2025. The NRC determination of whether to approve the proposed action will be documented separately from this assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed action.

###### *Need for the Proposed Action*

As required by 10 CFR 50.82(a)(8)(i), NDTs may be used by licensees if, in part, the withdrawals are for expenses for legitimate decommissioning activities consistent with the definition of decommissioning in 10 CFR 50.2. These activities are referred to as "radiological decommissioning" activities and have to do with removing a facility or site safely from service and reducing residual radioactivity and do not include other parts of the larger decommissioning process, such as spent fuel management and site restoration. Similarly, the regulation at 10 CFR 50.75(h)(1)(iv) restricts NDT disbursements (other than for payment of ordinary administrative costs and other incidental expenses of the trust in connection with the operation of the trust) to radiological decommissioning expenses until final radiological decommissioning has been completed. The provisions of 10 CFR 50.82(a)(8)(ii) generally restrict the use of NDTs until after the permanent cessation of operations. Therefore, partial exemptions from these regulations would be needed to allow the licensee to transfer certain earnings from the Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle NDTs to subaccounts within the NDTs that could then be used for activities related to the larger decommissioning process (not just to radiological decommissioning activities) and during operations.

In its exemption request, the licensee stated that the ability to use excess NDT earnings for activities related to the larger decommissioning process and during operations would help reduce overall decommissioning costs and would minimize long-term risks and uncertainties. Thus, the exemptions

would not impact the principal required to provide reasonable assurance that adequate funds will be available for the radiological decommissioning of the facilities while also enabling overall more efficient, timely, and cost-effective site decommissioning and restoration.

#### *Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action*

The proposed action involves exemptions from regulatory requirements that are of a financial nature and that do not have an impact on the environment. The proposed action does not introduce new operational activities at Braidwood, Byron, or LaSalle beyond actions covered under the current licensing bases and the current environmental impact statements. The proposed action would only allow the licensee to transfer certain earnings from the NDTs into subaccounts within the NDTs that could then be used for activities related to the larger decommissioning process and during operations, while maintaining the required principal for radiological decommissioning activities. Therefore, there would be no decrease in safety or environmental protection as a result of the proposed action, and the adequacy of radiological decommissioning funding would not be affected. Section 50.75 of 10 CFR requires a licensee to certify that radiological decommissioning financial assurance has been provided in the required amount, to adjust that amount annually, and to cover that amount. Since the proposed action would allow the licensee to use funds from the Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle NDTs that are in excess of those required for radiological decommissioning and for activities that are part of the larger decommissioning process, the adequacy of the funds dedicated to the decommissioning process would not be affected by the proposed action.

Due to the proposed action being financial in nature, it would not significantly increase the probability or consequences of radiological accidents and would have no direct radiological impacts. The proposed action would not authorize any changes to plant operations or physical structures, systems, or components, and would not affect the types or amounts of radiological effluents that may be released from the site. Therefore, there would be no change in occupational or public radiation exposure as a result of the proposed action. No new materials or chemicals would be introduced, and the operation of waste processing systems would remain unchanged. The design and function of all structures,

systems, and components that limit or monitor effluent releases would not be altered and would continue to meet applicable requirements. As such, there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential non-radiological environmental impacts, the proposed action would have no direct impacts on land use or water resources, including terrestrial and aquatic biota, as it involves no new construction or modification of plant operational systems. There would be no changes to the quality or quantity of non-radiological effluents. In addition, there would be no noticeable effect on socioeconomic conditions in the region, no air quality impacts, and no impacts to historic and cultural resources from the proposed action. Therefore, there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Accordingly, the NRC concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

#### *Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives to the Proposed Action*

As an alternative to the proposed action, the NRC staff considered denial of the proposed action (*i.e.*, the “no-action” alternative). Denial of the proposed action would result in the licensee either (1) postponing non-radiological decommissioning activities until the completion of radiological decommissioning activities, or (2) using other funding sources for non-radiological decommissioning activities prior to the completion of radiological decommissioning activities. In either case, there would be no change in the environmental impacts as compared to the proposed action, since the proposed action does not authorize any physical changes or new site activities. Therefore, the no-action alternative would have similar environmental impacts to those of the proposed action.

#### *Alternative Use of Resources*

There are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources under the proposed action.

#### *Agencies and Persons Consulted*

No additional agencies or persons were consulted regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action.

### **III. Finding of No Significant Impact**

The exemptions from 10 CFR 50.82(a)(8)(i), 10 CFR 50.82(a)(8)(ii), and 10 CFR 50.75(h)(1)(iv) would allow the

licensee to transfer certain earnings from the Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle NDTs to subaccounts within the NDTs that could then be used for activities related to the larger decommissioning process and during operations. The proposed action would not significantly affect plant safety, would not have a significant adverse effect on the probability of an accident occurring, and would not have any significant radiological or non-radiological environmental impacts. The proposed action involves exemptions from requirements that are of a financial nature and that would not have an impact on the human environment. Consistent with 10 CFR 51.21, the NRC conducted an EA for the proposed action, and this FONSI incorporates by reference the EA included in section II of this document. Therefore, the NRC concludes that the proposed action will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the NRC has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

Other than the licensee’s letter dated November 7, 2025, there are no other environmental documents associated with this review.

Previous considerations regarding the environmental impacts of operating Braidwood, Byron, and LaSalle are described in: (1) NUREG–1437, Supplement 55, “Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants Regarding Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2, Final Report,” dated November 2015 (ML15314A814); (2) NUREG–1026, “Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of Braidwood Station, Units 1 and 2,” dated June 1984 (ML14090A132); (3) NUREG–1437, Supplement 54, “Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants Regarding Byron Station, Units 1 and 2, Final Report,” dated July 2015 (ML15196A263); (4) NUREG–0848, “Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of Byron Station, Units 1 and 2,” dated April 1982 (ML13269A184); (5) NUREG–1437, Supplement 57, “Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants Regarding LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2, Final Report,” dated August 2016 (ML16238A029); and (6) NUREG–0486, “Final Environmental Statement Related to Operation of LaSalle County Nuclear Power Station, Unit Nos. 1 and 2,” dated November 1978 (ML14353A388).

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

Dated: April 16, 2026.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**Luis Cruz Rosado,**

*Project Manager, Plant Licensing Branch III,  
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing,  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.*

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## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 72-1031, 50-413, and 50-414;  
CEQ ID: EAXX-429-00-000-1775697562;  
NRC-2026-1486]

### Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC; Catawba Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2; Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory  
Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing an environmental assessment (EA) and a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for an exemption request submitted by Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (Duke) that would permit Catawba Nuclear Station (CNS) to maintain one loaded and to load nine transportable storage canisters (TSCs) in the MAGNASTOR® storage system at the Catawba Units 1 and 2 independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI), beginning July 6, 2026, in a storage condition where the terms, conditions, and specifications in the Certification of Compliance (CoC) No. 1031, Amendment No. 15, are not met.

**DATES:** The EA and FONSI referenced in this document are available on April 21, 2026.

**ADDRESSES:** Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2026-1486 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://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2026-1486. Address questions about Docket IDs in *Regulations.gov* to Bridget Curran; telephone: 301-415-1003; email: [Bridget.Curran@nrc.gov](mailto:Bridget.Curran@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

**CONTACT** section of this document.

- *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](mailto:PDR.Resource@nrc.gov). For the convenience of the reader, instructions about obtaining materials referenced in this document are provided in the "Availability of Documents" section.

- *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](mailto:PDR.Resource@nrc.gov) or call 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. eastern time (ET), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** John-Chau Nguyen, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555; telephone: 301-415-0262; email: [John-Chau.Nguyen@nrc.gov](mailto:John-Chau.Nguyen@nrc.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Introduction

The NRC is reviewing an exemption request from Duke, dated March 19, 2026. Duke is requesting an exemption, pursuant to section 72.7 of title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), in paragraphs 72.212(a)(2), 72.212(b)(3), 72.212(b)(5)(i), 72.212(b)(11), 72.214, 72.154(b), and 72.174 that require CNS to comply with the terms, conditions, and specifications of CoC No. 1031, Amendment No. 15. If approved, Duke's exemption request would accordingly allow CNS to maintain one loaded and to load nine TSCs in the MAGNASTOR® storage system, beginning July 6, 2026, in a storage condition where the terms, conditions, and specifications in CoC No. 1031, Amendment No. 15, are not met.

##### II. Environmental Assessment

###### Background

CNS is located on 391 acres in York County, South Carolina, approximately 18 miles southwest of Charlotte, North Carolina. Rock Hill, South Carolina, the nearest city, is about 6 miles south of the site. Catawba is situated on a peninsula that protrudes into Lake Wylie, a man-made lake created by the Wylie Dam on the Catawba River. Units 1 and 2 began operating in 1985 and 1986, respectively. Duke has been storing spent fuel in an ISFSI at CNS under a general license as authorized by

10 CFR part 72, subpart K, "General License for Storage of Spent Fuel at Power Reactor Sites." Duke currently uses the MAGNASTOR® storage system under CoC No. 1031, Amendment No. 15 for dry storage of spent nuclear fuel in the TSCs at the CNS ISFSI.

###### Description of the Proposed Action

The CoC is the NRC approved design for each dry cask storage system. The proposed action would exempt the applicant from the requirements of 10 CFR 72.212(a)(2), 72.212(b)(3), 72.212(b)(5)(i), 72.212(b)(11), 72.214, 72.154(b), and 72.174 only as these requirements pertain to the use of the TSC in the MAGNASTOR® storage system for the one already loaded and the planned loading of nine TSC beginning July 6, 2026. The proposed exemption would allow the already loaded TSC in the MAGNASTOR® storage system to remain in storage at the Catawba ISFSI and would authorize future use of the nine affected TSCs in planned loading campaigns, beginning July 6, 2026, in storage conditions where the terms, conditions, and specifications in CoC No. 1031, Amendment No. 15, are not met.

The MAGNASTOR® storage system CoC provides the requirements, conditions, and operating limits necessary for use of the system to store spent fuel. The MAGNASTOR® storage system uses three qualified neutron absorber materials—borated aluminum alloy, borated MMC, and Boral®—to ensure subcriticality in spent nuclear fuel storage and transport casks under all conditions. These materials, containing boron-10 (<sup>10</sup>B), are critical for the Pressurized Water Reactor (PWR) fuel basket design, which holds up to 37 assemblies and includes 68 absorber panels. Specifications require minimum effective areal density (75 percent for Boral, 90 percent for borated aluminum/MMC) and <sup>10</sup>B loading of 0.040 g/cm<sup>2</sup>, verified through testing and inspections.

On September 10, 2025, NAC International (NAC) reported a fabrication deficiency and provided an update on December 30, 2025, regarding neutron absorber panels supplied by 3M: test coupons were cut from non-approved sheet areas, causing some to fail <sup>10</sup>B density requirements. This affected 39 panels linked to ten TSCs at Duke's Catawba site, including one already loaded. NAC notified Duke, tagged affected TSCs, and initiated corrective actions under its Quality Assurance (QA) program. Engineering evaluations confirmed that the impact on reactivity is negligible (<2 Δk/σ), and other safety functions remain intact. Despite the deficiency, analyses show