

this period could “require additional personnel turnover, reduced schedule continuity, or reassignment of experienced workers during critical restoration and testing activities.” Palisades Energy also asserted that the imposition of online work hour controls could adversely affect human performance, configuration control, work coordination, and troubleshooting effectiveness during final plant restoration activities.

Under the proposed exemption, personnel would be able to continue to utilize the outage work hour controls in 10 CFR 26.205(d)(4) until 9 days before initial fuel load. The licensee considers that the “scheduling flexibility” provided by the outage work controls supports more effective management of cumulative fatigue. The NRC staff disagrees that further use of the outage work hour controls support the intent and purpose of 10 CFR part 26, subpart I. However, the nature and associated risk of returning a decommissioning plant to power operations was not considered during the development of the 2008 final rule for 10 CFR part 26. Palisades is in the unique position of being a licensed nuclear power reactor but falling into a risk profile somewhere between a construction site, a decommissioning site, a refueling outage, and an operating reactor. While Palisades is not a construction site, the NRC staff’s risk assessment found that the risk of offsite consequences to public health and safety from a decommissioning plant being actively returned to power operations is considerably lower than an operating reactor. For personnel on site, the possibility of radiological exposure is higher than compared to a site under construction or in decommissioning because there are irradiated materials on site from prior operations, but for the public health and safety around the plant the radiological risk is substantially lower when compared to an operating plant.

The NRC staff also considered the balance of public interest considerations, including the potential impacts of not granting the fourth exemption, which could result in the delay of restarting the Palisades Nuclear Plant and could potentially delay the amount of energy available to the surrounding area.

The FFD requirements in 10 CFR part 26 take a graded approach by imposing requirements that are commensurate with maintaining public health and safety and the common defense and security. The underlying purpose of the work hour requirements in 10 CFR part 26, subpart I, as they apply to an operating reactor, such as Palisades, is to ensure that individuals performing duties that could affect public health and safety or the common defense and security obtain adequate rest, and that their fatigue is adequately managed to reduce the incidence of human errors. For these operating power plants, reliable human performance is necessary to mitigate the potential for an accident across a range of plant conditions including recently and highly irradiated fuel either in the reactor core or in the SFP. However, even though Palisades is an operating reactor, the NRC staff has analyzed the risk profile of the

current configuration of the plant and determined that the granting of this exemption would not endanger life or property in Section III.B of this exemption.

Unlike an operating reactor, the reactor vessel at Palisades is still defueled and the irradiated spent fuel held in the SFP has cooled since the docketed certifications for permanent cessation of operations and permanent removal of fuel from the reactor vessel on May 20, 2022, and June 10, 2022, respectively. As the spent fuel has not been recently irradiated, the spent fuel on site has a significantly lower nuclear safety risk to public health and safety. Specifically, the NRC staff notes that the risk posed to the public health and safety is greater than a CP holder upon receipt of fuel assemblies and a nuclear power reactor in decommissioning, but lower than an operating reactor because the spent fuel has had significant time to cool and the reactor is not fueled. Additionally, because there is activated material at Palisades from previous operations, there are unique risks associated with returning SSCs to an operable status while working in areas with various levels of radioactivity. The staff evaluated the unique nature of the Palisades restart project, the continued applicability of the remaining requirements of 10 CFR 26, Subpart I, and the remaining work activities against the risk profile of the plant and the balance of public interest considerations. The NRC determined that applying a graded approach to FFD requirements that accounts for the nuclear safety risk of the plant configuration would be in the public interest until 9 days before fuel load. Therefore, the NRC staff finds that approval of the requested exemption is otherwise in the public interest.

E. Environmental Considerations

This action relates to changes to scheduling requirements. The NRC staff has determined that any ground disturbance is limited to previously disturbed areas. Additionally, the NRC staff has determined that the action involves no significant change in the types or significant increase in the amounts of any effluents that may be released offsite, no significant increase in individual or cumulative public or occupational radiation exposure, and no significant increase in the potential for or consequences from radiological accidents. Finally, the NRC staff has determined that a categorical exclusion applies and that special circumstances under 10 CFR 51.22, “Categorical exclusions,” are not present that would preclude reliance on the categorical exclusion. Accordingly, this action meets the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(d)(5). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22, no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the action.

IV. Conclusions

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 26.9, the exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants Palisades Energy, LLC a tailored one-time exemption from 10 CFR

26.205(d)(3) and (d)(7) for personnel performing duties under 10 CFR 26.4(a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), and (a)(4) for the duration of the exemption period until 9 days before the start of the unit’s initial fuel load into the reactor. For the personnel specified, Palisades Energy will ensure that individuals comply with the work hour control requirements specified in 10 CFR 26.205(d)(1), (d)(2), and (d)(4) for the duration of the exemption. In addition, Palisades Energy will comply with the three commitments in Attachment 2 of the Enclosure to the May 27, 2026, submittal and all mitigating actions listed under the section titled “Mitigating Strategy” for the duration of the exemption period.

The Palisades restart project is a first-of-a-kind activity where a nuclear power plant in decommissioning status is being returned to operational status. The current exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 26.205(d)(3) and (d)(7) directly supports activities unique to the Palisades restart project for specific groups of personnel, with particular consideration for the potential risk level of the plant to the public health and safety. Each request for an exemption from the requirements specified in 10 CFR 26.205(d)(3) or (d)(7) are evaluated on a case-by-case basis specific to the circumstances of the facility, the risk level to public health and safety, and the mitigation measures.

Dated: June 18, 2026.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

/RA/

Hipolito Gonzalez, Acting Director, Division of Licensing Projects 1, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC–2026–0364]

Information Collection: NRC Form 536, Operator Licensing Examination Data

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Renewal of existing information collection; request for comment.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) invites public comment on the renewal of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for an existing collection of information. The information collection is entitled, NRC Form 536, “Operator Licensing Examination Data.”

DATES: Submit comments by August 24, 2026. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

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://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC–2026–0364. Address questions about Docket IDs in *Regulations.gov* to Bridget.Curran@nrc.gov. For technical questions, contact the individual(s) listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristen Benney, Office of the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001; telephone: 301–415–6355; email: Infocollects.Resource@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments

A. Obtaining Information

Please refer to Docket ID NRC–2026–0364 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://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC–2026–0364. A copy of the collection of information and related instructions may be obtained without charge by accessing Docket ID NRC–2026–0364 on this website.

- *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. A copy of the collection of information and related instructions may be obtained without charge by accessing ADAMS Accession No. ML26103A232. The supporting statement is available in ADAMS under Accession Nos. ML26163A190.

- *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 (ET), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

- *NRC's Clearance Officer*: A copy of the collection of information and related instructions may be obtained without

charge by contacting the NRC's Clearance Officer, Kristen Benney, Office of the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, telephone: 301–415–6355; email: Infocollects.Resource@nrc.gov.

B. Submitting Comments

The NRC encourages electronic comment submission through the Federal rulemaking website (<https://www.regulations.gov>). Please include Docket ID NRC–2026–0364, in your comment submission.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information in comment submissions that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. All comment submissions are posted at <https://www.regulations.gov> and entered into ADAMS. Comment submissions are not routinely edited to remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the OMB, 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 comment submissions are not routinely edited to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment into ADAMS.

II. Background

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the NRC is requesting public comment on its intention to request the OMB's approval for the information collection summarized below.

1. *The title of the information collection*: NRC Form 536, "Operator Licensing Examination Data."
2. *OMB approval number*: 3150–0131.
3. *Type of submission*: Extension.
4. *The form number, if applicable*: Form 536.

5. *How often the collection is required or requested*: Annually.

6. *Who will be required or asked to respond*: (a) All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors under the provision of part 50 of title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," except those that have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel, (b) All holders of, or applicants for, a limited work authorization, early site permit, or combined licenses issued under 10 CFR

part 52, "Licenses, Certifications and Approval for Nuclear Power Plants," (c) All holders of, or applicants for, operating licenses for advanced power reactors under the provision of title 10 CFR part 53, "Risk-Informed, Technology-Inclusive Regulatory Framework for Commercial Nuclear Plants."

7. *The estimated number of annual responses*: 53.

8. *The estimated number of annual respondents*: 53.

9. *The estimated number of hours needed annually to comply with the information collection requirement or request*: 39.75.

10. *Abstract*: The NRC is requesting renewal of its clearance to annually request all commercial power reactor licensees and applicants for an operating license to voluntarily send to the NRC: (1) Their projected number of candidates for initial operator licensing examinations; (2) the estimated dates of the examinations, and (3) if the examinations will be facility developed or NRC developed. This information is used to plan budgets and resources in regard to operator examination scheduling in order to meet the needs of the nuclear power industry.

III. Specific Requests for Comments

The NRC is seeking comments that address the following questions:

1. Is the proposed collection of information necessary for the NRC to properly perform its functions? Does the information have practical utility? Please explain your answer.

2. Is the estimate of the burden of the information collection accurate? Please explain your answer.

3. Is there a way to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected?

4. How can the burden of the information collection on respondents be minimized, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology?

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

Dated: June 22, 2026.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Kristen Benney, NRC Clearance Officer,
Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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