



NRC NEWS

Office of Public Affairs, Headquarters

Washington, DC. 20555-0001

www.nrc.gov ■ opa.resource@nrc.gov



No: 24-059

July 18, 2024

CONTACT: [David McIntyre](#), 301-415-8200

NRC Approves Simplified Mandatory Hearing Procedures for Reactor and Enrichment Licenses

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved simplified procedures for mandatory hearings on licensing decisions for commercial nuclear power plants and uranium enrichment facilities to make the hearings more transparent and efficient. The staff's proposals, the Commission's decision, and Commission Voting Records are available on the NRC [website](#) under SECY-24-0032.

The changes are effective immediately and will be employed in the mandatory hearing anticipated later this year for the Hermes 2 advanced reactor review. Mandatory hearings, also informally called "uncontested" hearings, for power reactors will involve written materials without oral presentations, with the Commission as presiding officer. Hearings for uranium enrichment facilities will be delegated to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel with case-specific Commission direction for streamlined procedures.

"As the agency prepares for the potential increase in standardized reactor designs and applications for their deployment, it is important to balance efficiency, clarity, and openness in Commission decision-making," NRC Chair Christopher T. Hanson wrote in a Feb. 7 [memo](#) directing the agency's Office of the General Counsel to develop proposals for future hearings. "Within the guardrails of our current statutory requirements, I believe significant process efficiencies can be gained."

The agency is required by law to conduct hearings to determine the sufficiency of the NRC staff's review before issuing combined licenses, construction permits and early site permits for power reactors, or licenses for construction and operation of uranium enrichment facilities.

The Commission, or the ASLBP designated as "presiding officer," has conducted 21 mandatory hearings over the past 20 years. These have typically involved oral arguments with witness testimony and extensive written briefs and responses.