

Exelon moves forward

Company submits licensing application for review by Nuclear Commission

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BY ALLISON MILES - AMILES@VICAD.COM

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Exelon Generation is closer to securing a possible nuclear plant in Victoria County Wednesday after submitting its Combined Construction and Operating License application.

The company submitted the approximately 6,500-page document in DVD format to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said Bill Harris, Exelon Nuclear's manager of community outreach for Texas.

The document includes information regarding the proposed plant's environmental, licensing and even emergency preparedness aspects, he said.

"It represents almost a year of hard work by very dedicated, not only Exelon employees, but contract folks that we've had working on this project," he said. "It's just a lot of very in-detail, complex paperwork."

The NRC submission is the 12th one made by a United States nuclear operating organization in the past 14 months, according to an Exelon news release. It does not indicate intent to build.

In June 2007, the Warrenville, Ill.-based Exelon announced plans to apply for licensing in the South Texas region. If it decides to build, it will locate on an 11,500-acre tract of land about 13 miles south of Victoria.

That plant would generate at least 3,000 megawatts, or enough to power more than 1.85 million Texas homes, according to the release.

The next step in the process is the SUNSI, Harris said, which stands for sensitive unclassified non-safeguards information. This involves removing certain information, such as access points to the plant, before it is released to the public.

The SUNSI could take about two weeks, he said.

After its completion, the NRC will post the application on its Web site so the public can review the infrastructure changes, water usage and other issues that go along with the prospective build, said Craig Nesbit, Exelon Nuclear's director of communication.

"There's just a lot of really good information in there for people that have an interest in this project one way or the other," Nesbit said. "Things that affect them on a day-to-day basis."

The NRC then takes about 60 days to evaluate the application, Harris said, making sure the necessary nuts and bolts are there.

Exelon will most likely decide on whether to build between now and early 2010, Nesbit said.

The NRC has as much time as it wants to review the application, although it typically takes between three and four years, Nesbit said.

The Wednesday announcement is an important milestone in making the Victoria plant a reality, Victoria County Judge Don Pozzi said in the news release.

"By moving forward on time and on target, Exelon continues to demonstrate its serious intentions and commitment to Victoria," he said.

The company is working through the process as it outlined from the very beginning, Harris said.

Harris invited community members with questions or concerns regarding the project to visit his office at 114 N. Main St.

"I would like to calm anyone's fears because there's nothing fearful about what Exelon proposes to do," he said. "In fact, just the opposite."



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June 2007: Exelon Nuclear announces Victoria and Matagorda Counties as front-runners for a proposed nuclear plant. Matagorda County, at this time, was the primary site.

November 2007: The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and Exelon come to a two-year water reservation agreement, which gives the nuclear company access to 75,000 acre-feet of water per year. The deal rang in at an estimated \$800,000.

Dec. 18, 2007: Exelon announces Victoria as its primary site for the proposed plant.

July 2008: Exelon opens its Victoria office at 114 N. Main St.

Aug. 7, 2008: The NRC hosts its first scoping meeting in Victoria.

Sept. 3, 2008: Exelon submits its Combined Construction and Operating License application to the NRC.

2010: Exelon plans to make its decision on whether to build by early this year.


2012: A decision on the license is not expected before this time.

Source: Victoria Advocate, Exelon Nuclear Director of Communication Craig Nesbit and Exelon news release

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