

The Daily Dish

Streamlining Nuclear Approvals

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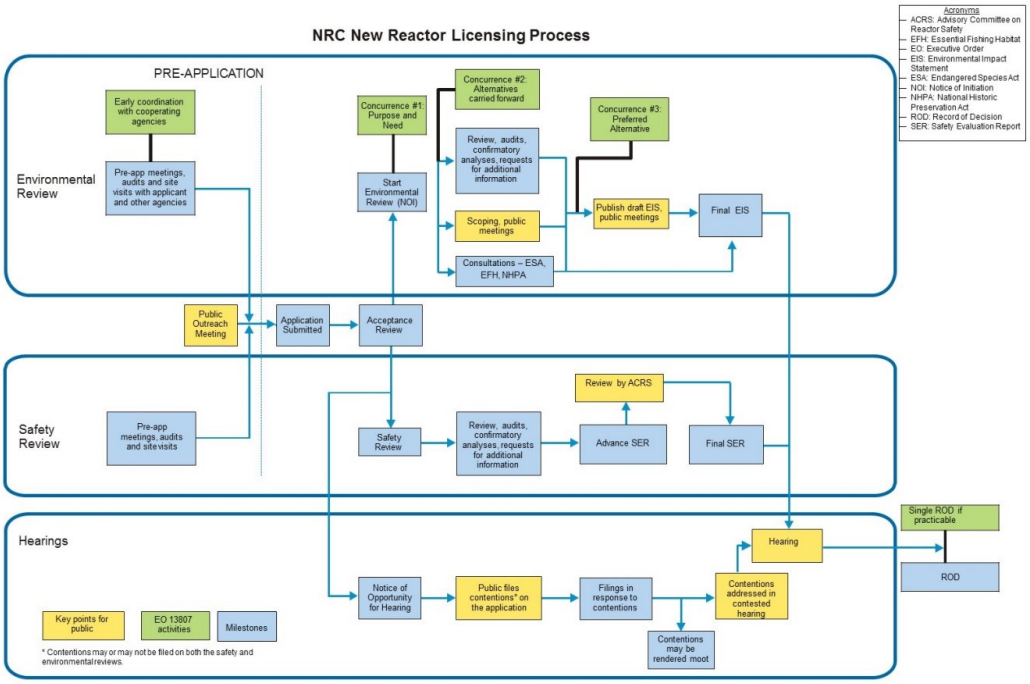
Eakinomics: Streamlining Nuclear Approvals

"I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is." – Greta Thunberg, World Economic Forum, Davos, January 24, 2019

The urgency of action is a common theme among activists for more aggressive climate-change policies. Unfortunately, the development and adoption of new technologies will take time; the feasible "immediate" actions – stop extracting coal, oil, gas, and so forth – will be so economically damaging as to stop the development of those same technologies.

The exception is nuclear power. Nuclear power is the only known zero-emissions technology. If urgency dictates quick action, the construction of new nuclear power plants would seemingly be the top priority. It is not. Why?

The first obstacle is that many pro climate-change policies candidates (notably, front-runner Bernie Sanders and his ideological wingman Elizabeth Warren) flatly oppose nuclear power. That's incoherent, but it is what it is. The second is that even if you wanted to build a new facility, this is what stands in your way:



You don't have to understand every box and arrow to recognize that getting the approval for a new nuclear power plant from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is a *long* process. But does it have to be that way?

AAF's Dan Bosch takes a look at the issue and has three main takeaways. In his words:

- The current environmental review process at the NRC is long and costly, deterring investment in new nuclear plants and reactors.
- A recent proposal from the Trump Administration's Council on Environmental Quality offers the NRC an opportunity to reform its National Environmental Policy Act regulations in order to make nuclear power more economically viable.
- Recommended reforms include establishing deadlines within the environmental review process, adhering to page limits, and limiting the development of alternative scenarios.

It's a sensible approach at an important time.