

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3491

To amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to improve and strengthen the safety inspection process of nuclear facilities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont (for himself, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. OLVER, and Mr. HODES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to improve and strengthen the safety inspection process of nuclear facilities.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. INDEPENDENT SAFETY ASSESSMENTS.**

4 Section 103 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42
5 U.S.C. 2133) is amended by inserting after subsection d.
6 the following:

7 “e. INDEPENDENT SAFETY ASSESSMENTS.—

8 “(1) DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURE.—Not
9 later than 90 days after the date of enactment of
10 this subsection, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

1 (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Commission’)
2 shall develop an independent safety assessment pro-
3 cedure.

4 “(2) CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT.—

5 “(A) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE RE-
6 QUESTOR.—In this paragraph, the term ‘eligible
7 requestor’ means—

8 “(i) a Governor of a State in which a
9 facility of a licensee is located;

10 “(ii) a public utility commission of a
11 State in which a facility of a licensee is lo-
12 cated; and

13 “(iii) a Governor of a State that—

14 “(I) because of dangers to the
15 public relating to potential ingestion
16 of water or foods that have been con-
17 taminated with radiation from a com-
18 mercial nuclear power plant, is located
19 in an emergency planning zone, as de-
20 fined in section 350.2 of title 44,
21 Code of Federal Regulations (or a
22 successor regulation); and

23 “(II) is not the same State in
24 which the facility of the licensee is lo-
25 cated.

1 “(B) REQUEST OF ASSESSMENT.—

2 “(i) IN GENERAL.—At the request of
3 an eligible requestor, the Commission shall
4 conduct an independent safety assessment
5 in accordance with the independent safety
6 assessment procedure developed under
7 paragraph (1) if the licensee has—8 “(I) applied to the Commission
9 for—10 “(aa) an extension of the op-
11 erating license of the licensee; or12 “(bb) approval of an ex-
13 tended power uprate for the li-
14 censee; or15 “(II) during any 5-year period,
16 received, under the reactor oversight
17 process of the Commission, 2 or more
18 greater-than-green inspection findings.19 “(ii) CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT.—
20 The Commission shall conduct an assess-
21 ment requested by an eligible requestor
22 under clause (i) not later than 18 months
23 after the date on which the eligible re-
24 questor requested the assessment.

25 “(3) INSPECTION OF FACILITY.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In conducting an
2 independent safety assessment under paragraph
3 (2)(B), the Commission shall inspect the de-
4 sign, construction, maintenance, and oper-
5 ational safety performance of the facility of the
6 licensee.

7 “(B) SCOPE OF INSPECTION.—An inspec-
8 tion of a facility of a licensee conducted under
9 subparagraph (A) shall—

10 “(i) be at least equal in scope, depth,
11 and breadth to the independent safety as-
12 sessment conducted in 1996 by the Com-
13 mission of the Maine Yankee Nuclear
14 Power Plant, located in Wiscasset, Maine;
15 and

16 “(ii) include an examination of the
17 systems of the facility of the licensee, in-
18 cluding—

19 “(I) the reactor containment sys-
20 tems;

21 “(II) the reactor emergency core
22 cooling systems;

23 “(III) the control room and con-
24 tainment ventilation systems;

1 “(IV) the electrical system (in-
2 cluding testing of relevant transients);
3 “(V) the condensate and
4 feedwater systems;
5 “(VI) the spent fuel storage sys-
6 tems;
7 “(VII) any other system re-
8 quested by the Governor of the State,
9 or a public utility commission of the
10 State, in which the facility of the li-
11 censee is located; and
12 “(VIII) any other system identi-
13 fied by a majority of the members of
14 an inspection team described in para-
15 graph (4).

16 “(4) INSPECTION TEAMS.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—An independent safety
18 assessment conducted under paragraph (2)(B)
19 shall be conducted by an inspection team.

20 “(B) COMPOSITION.—An inspection team
21 shall be composed of not less than 25 members,
22 of whom—

23 “(i) not less than 16 members shall
24 be—

1 “(I) employees of the Commis-
2 sion; and

3 “(II) unaffiliated with the re-
4 gional office of the Commission in the
5 region in which the facility of the li-
6 censee is located;

7 “(ii) not less than 6 members shall be
8 independent contractors who have not
9 worked for, or at—

10 “(I) the facility of the licensee; or
11 “(II) any other nuclear power
12 plant owned or operated by the owner
13 or operator of the facility of the li-
14 censee; and

15 “(iii) not less than 3 members shall be
16 appointed by the eligible requestor.

17 “(5) REPORT.—

18 “(A) PREPARATION OF PRELIMINARY RE-
19 PORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date
20 on which an inspection team completes an inde-
21 pendent safety assessment of a facility of a li-
22 censee under paragraph (2)(B), the inspection
23 team shall prepare a preliminary report describ-
24 ing the findings and recommendations of the in-
25 spection team.

1 “(B) AVAILABILITY OF PRELIMINARY RE-
2 PORT.—For a period of 90 days beginning on
3 the date on which the inspection team com-
4 pletes a preliminary report prepared under sub-
5 paragraph (A), the inspection team shall make
6 available for review and comment by the public
7 a copy of the preliminary report.

8 “(C) CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS.—In
9 preparing a final version of a preliminary report
10 developed under subparagraph (A), the inspec-
11 tion team shall take into consideration any com-
12 ments received from the public that are appro-
13 priate, as determined by the inspection team.

14 “(D) SUBMISSION OF FINAL VERSION.—
15 Not later than 90 days after the date on which
16 the period of review and public comment ends
17 under subparagraph (B), the inspection team
18 shall submit to the Commission a final version
19 of the preliminary report developed under sub-
20 paragraph (A).

21 “(6) AFFECT ON LICENSING ACTIONS.—A final
22 decision by the Commission of whether to extend an
23 operating license, approve an extended power uprate,
24 or continue to operate under a license at a facility

1 of a licensee assessed under paragraph (2)(B) shall
2 not be made until the later of the date on which—

3 “(A) the Commission has completed the
4 independent safety assessment of the facility of
5 the licensee; and

6 “(B) the licensee has fully accepted and
7 implemented each finding and recommendation
8 of the report approved by the Commission relat-
9 ing to the independent safety assessment of the
10 facility of the licensee submitted under para-
11 graph (5)(D).

12 “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
13 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
14 this subsection \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years
15 2008 through 2012, to remain available until ex-
16 pended.”.

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