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NRC issues licenses to Duke Energy for new South Carolina plant

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The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recently issued two combined operating licenses to Duke Energy for the William States Lee III nuclear power plant near Gaffney, South Carolina.

The licenses allow Duke Energy to construct and operate two AP1000 nuclear reactors at the Lee site. The Commission authorized the issuance of the licenses after completion of its environmental review and safety evaluations. Duke submitted its application for the site on Dec. 12, 2007.

The licenses contain conditions regarding requirements for Mitigation Strategies and Spent Fuel Pool Instrumentation, as well as emergency preparedness plans and procedures.

While it will take six to 10 years from the beginning of construction for the site to be ready for use, the company is still considering how and whether it will build the reactors. Factors such as service areas for provided electricity, cost

of construction and regulatory policies will impact the final decision.

Duke currently operates six nuclear facilities in the Carolinas, which produce 40 percent of the electricity the company provides. It is also owns a damaged plant in Florida, which has been retired. All of these facilities were built in the '70s and '80s.

The Lee site plant would create over 4,000 temporary construction jobs and more than 900 permanent jobs at the facility, and would employ one the safest and most economical nuclear power technologies available.