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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

10 CFR Part 52

[NRC–2025–0018]

RIN 3150–AL26

Revising the Duration of Design Certifications

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Direct final rule; confirmation of effective date.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is confirming the effective date of September 15, 2025, for the direct final rule published in the *Federal Register* on July 2, 2025. This direct final rule amended the NRC's regulations to revise the duration of design certifications (DCs). This action replaced the 15-year duration for DCs with a 40-year duration period, both for existing DCs currently in effect and generically for future DCs. This direct final rule did not change the date of issuance for existing DCs (*i.e.*, the start date by which an existing DC may be referenced remains unchanged). This direct final rule also incorporated a minor editorial correction.

DATES: The effective date of September 15, 2025, for the direct final rule published July 2, 2025 (90 FR 28869), is confirmed.

ADDRESSES: Please refer to Docket ID NRC–2025–0018 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information for this action. You may obtain publicly available information related to this action by any of the following methods:

- *Federal Rulemaking website:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC–2025–0018. Address questions about NRC dockets to Helen Chang; telephone: 301–415–3228; email: Helen.Chang@nrc.gov. For technical questions, contact the individuals listed

in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document.

- *NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):* You may obtain publicly available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "Begin ADAMS Public Search." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1–800–397–4209, at 301–415–4737, or by email to PDR.Resource@nrc.gov. The ADAMS accession number for each document referenced (if it is available in ADAMS) is provided the first time it is mentioned in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

- *NRC's PDR:* The PDR, where you may examine and order copies of publicly available documents, is open by appointment. To make an appointment to visit the PDR, please send an email to PDR.Resource@nrc.gov or call 1–800–397–4209 or 301–415–4737, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel Doyle, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, telephone: 301–415–3748, email: Daniel.Doyle@nrc.gov; or Jordan Glisan, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, telephone: 301–415–3478, email: Jordan.Glisan@nrc.gov. Both are staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On July 2, 2025 (90 FR 28869), the NRC published a direct final rule amending its regulations in part 52 of title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* to revise the duration of design certifications.

In the direct final rule, the NRC stated that if no significant adverse comments were received, the direct final rule would become effective on September 15, 2025. The NRC received and docketed four comment submissions on the companion proposed rule (90 FR 28911; July 2, 2025). Electronic copies of the comments can be obtained from the federal rulemaking website <https://www.regulations.gov> under Docket ID NRC–2025–0018 and are also available in ADAMS under Accession Nos.

ML25209A465, ML25211A180, ML25211A187, and ML25217A008. As explained in the July 2, 2025, direct final rule, the NRC would withdraw the direct final rule only if it received a significant adverse comment. A significant adverse comment is a comment where the commenter explains why the rule would be inappropriate, challenges its underlying premise or approach, or shows why it would be ineffective or unacceptable without a change. A comment is adverse and significant if:

(1) The comment opposes the rule and provides a reason sufficient to require a substantive response in a notice-and-comment process. For example, a substantive response is required when:

(a) The comment causes the NRC staff to reevaluate (or reconsider) its position or conduct additional analysis;

(b) The comment raises an issue serious enough to warrant a substantive response to clarify or complete the record; or

(c) The comment raises a relevant issue that was not previously addressed or considered by the NRC staff.

(2) The comment proposes a change or an addition to the rule, and it is apparent that the rule would be ineffective or unacceptable without incorporation of the change or addition; or

(3) The comment causes the NRC staff to make a change (other than editorial) to the rule.

For the reasons discussed in more detail in Section II, "Public Comment Analysis," of this document, none of the comments contained in the submissions are considered significant adverse comments.

II. Public Comment Analysis

The NRC evaluated the comments against the criteria described in the direct final rule and determined that none of the comments submitted on the proposed rule are significant adverse comments. The public comments received on this action did not warrant any additions or changes to the final rule. The NRC is not making substantive changes to the rule; it is apparent that the rule is effective and acceptable as proposed, without the need for a substantive change or addition. The comments did not raise a relevant issue that was not previously addressed or considered by the NRC, and the comments did not cause the NRC to

either (1) reevaluate or reconsider its position, or (2) conduct additional analyses.

The comment submissions from ClearPath (ADAMS Accession No. ML25209A465) and The Breakthrough Institute (ADAMS Accession No. ML25211A180) did not oppose the rule. The comment submissions from Andrew Kalukin (ADAMS Accession No. ML25211A187) and the anonymous commenter (ADAMS Accession No. ML25217A008) opposed the rule, but they did not meet the criteria for significant adverse comments; however, the NRC is taking this opportunity to respond to these comments to clarify information about the direct final rule.

The following paragraphs summarize each individual comment from Andrew Kalukin and the anonymous commenter followed by the NRC response.

Comment 1: The commenter opposes extending the design certification period from 15 to 40 years, expressing concern that too many nuclear plants are obsolete in their safety technology, such as engineering to withstand ground motion. The commenter also expresses concern about the number of safety violations and near misses at nuclear plants.

NRC Response: The NRC disagrees with this comment. The comment does not provide sufficient information to identify obsolete safety technology. Nuclear power plants are designed and built to withstand earthquakes and other natural hazards, and the NRC continues to examine new seismic information as it becomes available. Safety violations at nuclear power plants are dispositioned through the NRC's inspection and enforcement programs in a manner intended to reflect the seriousness of the violation and the circumstances involved. The NRC made no changes to the rule as a result of this comment.

Comment 2: The commenter asserts that there is an insufficient basis for extending the duration of standard design certifications, arguing that this change would undermine the regulatory structure of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*. The commenter states that extending the certification period by more than a factor of two would exceed the NRC's current experience with design certifications, and the agency has not adequately evaluated or discussed the potential implications of this extension. The commenter states that this change would delay compliance with safety requirements, such as those related to aircraft impact assessments, which were previously determined by the NRC to provide a substantial increase in public health and safety protections.

The commenter also asserts that the issue finality provisions applicable to DCs limit the NRC's ability to require updates and improvements to certified designs during the approval period, whereas shorter renewal periods offer more frequent opportunities for changes to be made during subsequent renewal periods. The commenter asserts that the direct final rule could reduce regulatory flexibility and create inefficiencies.

NRC Response: The NRC disagrees with this comment. The NRC considered all relevant implications of the amendments made by this direct final rule. The **Federal Register** notice for the direct final rule discusses how the amendments cause no reduction in safety or security. Section IV, "Discussion," explains that the NRC has processes to address potential safety or security issues outside of the renewal process, including, among other ways, by making generic changes to DC rules or plant-specific changes by Commission order.

With respect to the commenter's concern regarding aircraft impact assessments, each DC rule affected by this direct final rule does comply with the NRC's aircraft impact assessment regulations. This includes the AP1000 design, which was amended to address the NRC's aircraft impact assessment rule in 2011 (76 FR 82079; December 30, 2011).

Regarding the commenter's concern about the issue finality provisions, the NRC can effectively update DC rules even though they do not need to be renewed as often. This is explained in the **Federal Register** notice for the direct final rule and in this document. The NRC has also successfully updated DC rules before, even with issue finality provisions in place, including changes to address the NRC's aircraft impact assessment regulations. The issue finality provisions will not prevent the NRC from taking action to address safety or security concerns. In fact, the criteria for requiring design changes during a DC renewal review (found in 10 CFR 52.59(b)(1)–(b)(3)) are encompassed by the issue finality criteria for amending a DC during the term of the DC (found in 10 CFR 52.63(a)(1)). Also, as reflected in 10 CFR 52.63(a)(1), any person may petition to amend a DC, and the Commission may amend a DC on its own motion. To the extent the commenter objects to the NRC's issue finality provisions, these provisions were designed to appropriately balance important factors, including regulatory stability, flexibility, and efficiency, and are outside the scope of this rulemaking.

The NRC made no changes to the rule as a result of this comment.

Comment 3: The commenter criticizes the NRC's use of the direct final rulemaking process, stating that it was inappropriate and lacked sufficient transparency.

NRC Response: The NRC disagrees with this comment. The NRC uses the direct final rule process for regulatory amendments that are unlikely to be controversial. The direct final rule process allows an agency to issue a rule without having to go through the review process twice (*i.e.*, at the proposed and final rule stages) if there are no significant adverse comments, while at the same time offering the public the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. The NRC made no changes to the rule as a result of this comment.

Comment 4: Addressing the NRC's rationale concerning regulatory burden, the commenter argues that the agency has not proven that the current certification duration imposes an unnecessary regulatory burden. The commenter maintains that the renewal process provides benefits that would be lost or diminished because it allows for regular updates to designs in response to new safety requirements.

NRC Response: The NRC disagrees with this comment. The **Federal Register** notice for the direct final rule discusses how the amendments reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens with no reduction in safety or security. Section IV, "Discussion," explains that (1) the 15-year certification period did not allow for sufficient time for operating experience to accumulate to provide new insights in a renewal application, and thus, resulted in inefficient use of resources both on the part of the NRC and the applicant; and (2) that the NRC retains other means of ensuring that codified DCs and the plants referencing them continue to meet safety and security requirements (90 FR 28869, 28870–871; July 2, 2025). In addition, Section VII, "Regulatory Analysis," describes how the rule is estimated to result in averted costs of approximately \$56.7 million in 2024 dollars to the NRC, licensees, and applicants over the analysis period (90 FR 28869, 28871; July 2, 2025). The NRC made no changes to the rule as a result of this comment.

In summary, the NRC did not receive any significant adverse comments and therefore, this direct final rule will become effective as scheduled.

Dated: August 21, 2025.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
Araceli Billoch Colon,
*Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Rulemaking
Support Branch, Division of Rulemaking,
Environmental, and Financial Support Office
of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.*

[FR Doc. 2025-16286 Filed 8-25-25; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Office of Foreign Assets Control

31 CFR Part 542

Syrian Sanctions Regulations

AGENCY: Office of Foreign Assets Control, Treasury.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is removing from the Code of Federal Regulations the Syrian Sanctions Regulations as a result of the termination of the national emergency on which the regulations were based and further changes to the policy of the United States towards Syria.

DATES: This rule is effective August 26, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: OFAC: Assistant Director for Regulatory Affairs, 202-622-4855; or <https://ofac.treasury.gov/contact-ofac>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Availability

This document and additional information concerning OFAC are available on OFAC's website: <https://ofac.treasury.gov>.

Background

On May 11, 2004, the President, invoking the authority of, *inter alia*, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA) and the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (Pub. L. 108-175, 117 Stat. 2482 (22 U.S.C. 2151 note)), issued Executive Order (E.O.) 13338 of May 11, 2004, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain Goods to Syria" (69 FR 26751, May 13, 2004). In E.O. 13338, the President determined that the actions of the Government of Syria in supporting terrorism, continuing its occupation of Lebanon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, and undermining United States and international efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq constituted an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national

security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and declared a national emergency to deal with that threat.

On April 5, 2005, OFAC issued the Syrian Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 542 (70 FR 17201, April 5, 2005) (the "Regulations"), to implement E.O. 13338, pursuant to authorities delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury in E.O. 13338. The Regulations were initially issued in abbreviated form for the purpose of providing immediate guidance to the public.

On May 2, 2014, OFAC reissued the Regulations in their entirety (79 FR 25414, May 2, 2014), and, among other effects, implemented E.O. 13399 of April 25, 2006, "Blocking Property of Additional Persons in Connection With the National Emergency With Respect to Syria" (71 FR 25059, April 28, 2006), E.O. 13460 of February 13, 2008, "Blocking Property of Additional Persons in Connection With the National Emergency With Respect to Syria" (73 FR 8991, February 15, 2008), E.O. 13572 of April 29, 2011, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to Human Rights Abuses in Syria" (76 FR 24787, May 3, 2011), E.O. 13573 of May 18, 2011, "Blocking Property of Senior Officials of the Government of Syria" (76 FR 29143, May 20, 2011), E.O. 13582 of August 17, 2011, "Blocking Property of the Government of Syria and Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to Syria" (76 FR 52209, August 22, 2011), and E.O. 13606 of April 22, 2012, "Blocking the Property and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Certain Persons With Respect to Grave Human Rights Abuses by the Governments of Iran and Syria via Information Technology" (77 FR 24571, April 24, 2012).

On June 6, 2024, OFAC further amended the Regulations (89 FR 48310, June 6, 2024) to, among other effects, implement relevant provisions of E.O. 13608 of May 1, 2012, "Prohibiting Certain Transactions With and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Foreign Sanctions Evaders With Respect to Iran and Syria" (77 FR 26409, May 3, 2012), the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8791 *et seq.*), the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9401 *et seq.*), and the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 116-92, Div. F, Title LXXIV, 133 Stat. 2290 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note)).

On June 30, 2025, the President issued E.O. 14312, "Providing for the Revocation of Syria Sanctions" (90 FR 29395, July 3, 2025) to, among other objectives, remove sanctions on Syria

without providing relief to the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or other terrorist organizations, human rights abusers, those linked to chemical weapons or proliferation-related activities, or other persons that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the United States, Syria, and its neighbors. In E.O. 14312, the President found that the circumstances that gave rise to the actions taken in the Executive orders imposing sanctions on Syria pursuant to the national emergency declared in E.O. 13338, related to the policies and actions of the former regime of Bashar al-Assad, had been transformed by developments over the six months preceding June 30, 2025, including the positive actions taken by the new Syrian government under President Ahmed al-Sharaa. In section 3 of E.O. 14312, the President terminated, effective July 1, 2025, the national emergency declared in E.O. 13338 and revoked that order and E.O.s 13399, 13460, 13572, 13573, and 13582. Additionally, in section 4(b) of E.O. 14312, the President amended E.O. 13606 by removing reference in the preamble to E.O. 13338 and replacing it with reference to E.O. 13894, as relied upon for additional steps and further amended in subsequent Executive orders. Moreover, while E.O. 13608 remains in effect with respect to its Iran and Iran-related antiterrorism and non-proliferation authorities, with the termination of the national emergency declared in E.O. 13338, it no longer has effect with respect to the Syria-specific authorities in furtherance of the national emergency declared in that Executive order.

As a result, OFAC is removing the Regulations from the Code of Federal Regulations. Pursuant to section 202(a) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(a)) and section 3(b) of E.O. 14312, termination of the national emergency declared in E.O. 13338 shall not affect any action taken or pending proceeding not finally concluded or determined as of July 1, 2025, any action or proceeding based on any act committed prior to July 1, 2025, or any rights or duties that matured or penalties that were incurred prior to July 1, 2025.

Section 4(a) of E.O. 14312 further amends E.O. 13894 of October 14, 2019, "Blocking Property and Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Syria" (84 FR 55851, October 17, 2019) as amended by E.O. 14142 of January 15, 2025, "Taking Additional Steps With Respect to the Situation in Syria" (90 FR 6709, January 17, 2025), to ensure meaningful accountability for perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations and