icy Act (NEPA) when it excluded potential environmental impacts of a 29-mile-long, 300-foot-wide transmission line corridor from the final environmental impact statement for the proposed project. In a February 27 press release announcing its appeal, the group cited a change made in 2007 to the NRC's limited work authorization rule, which, it said, categorized things such as transmission line corridors as "preconstruction activities" in order to avoid having to consider them in a project's environmental assessment.

"This is the first time the NRC's 2007 limited work authorization (LWA) rule change has been challenged," said Beyond Nuclear's Kevin Kamps in the press release. "LWA allowed ground to be broken, and major excavation and construction to begin in a great big hurry, at proposed new reactors at Vogtle, in Georgia, and Summer, in South Carolina. We are striving to prevent such high-speed bulldozing, in violation of NEPA, at Fermi-3." According to the press release, the LWA change is "an end-run around many decades of established environmental protection law."

An NRC senior public affairs officer, Viktoria Mitlyng, addressed the group's petition in a March 2 report in the *Monroe News*, stating, "The agency will respond as necessary through its normal legal processes. The NRC conducted a thorough review of the environmental and safety aspects of the combined operating license application for Fermi-3 before issuing the license in May 2015."

For its part, DTE Electric has said repeatedly that it has no immediate plans to build another unit at the Fermi site.

OVERSIGHT

NRC issues 2017 reactor performance assessments

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission in March issued its annual reactor performance assessment letters to the licensees of the nation's 99 commercial nuclear power reactors operating in 2017. According to a March 5 NRC press release, at the end of last year, 96 units occupied the two highest-performance columns in the NRC's five-column Reactor Oversight Process action matrix, with the 83 reactors in column one, Licensee Response, receiving the lowest level of NRC attention, and the 13 in column two, Regulatory Response, requiring additional inspections to resolve one or two findings of more than very low significance. These numbers match those from the end of 2016 (*NN*, Apr. 2017, p. 14).

The units in the Regulatory Response column at the end of 2017 included the Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry-1, -2, and -3 in Alabama and Sequoyah-1 and -2 in Tennessee; Duke Power's Catawba-2 in South Carolina; Exelon's Clinton in Illinois; Energy Northwest's Columbia in Washington; Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Diablo Canyon-2 in California; DTE Electric's Fermi-2 in Michigan; Entergy's Grand Gulf in Mississippi; FirstEnergy's Perry in Ohio; and Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation's Wolf Creek in Kansas. (On February 28, the NRC notified TVA that Watts Bar-2 in Tennessee was being moved to Regulatory Response from Licensee Response due to excessive unplanned scrams.) Since the end of the reporting period, Diablo Canyon-2 and Fermi-2 have resolved their findings and have transitioned back to Licensee Response (*NN*, Feb. 2018, p. 76, and *NN*, Mar. 2018, p. 15, respectively).

The remaining three reactors—Entergy's Pilgrim-1 in Massachusetts and its two Arkansas Nuclear One units—continue to reside in the matrix's fourth column, Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone. ANO-1 and -2 were moved to column four in February 2015 over flood protection issues, while Pilgrim was moved there in September 2015 as a result of safety relief valve performance when off-site power was lost during a storm. NN