United Kingdom

The United Kingdom’s Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) organization has significantly improved its safety case for licensing a deep geologic repository for high-level radioactive waste, but it has more work to do, according to a joint report released by the Environment Agency (EA) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) on October 30, 2019.

The report summarizes the work that EA and ONR have carried out to scrutinize the activities of RWM, the subsidiary of the U.K. Nuclear Decommissioning Authority that is responsible for developing a geological disposal facility for HLW and for providing advice on managing radioactive waste. The report claims that the oversight provided by EA and ONR “is helping [RWM] to develop a good understanding of the regulatory requirements and associated regulatory submissions required to apply for environmental permits and a nuclear site license for geological disposal activities.”

DOE updates

Based on its review of the Department of Energy’s environmental cleanup decision-making process, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is recommending that the DOE adopt a risk-informed cleanup policy. A GAO report released in October 2019 found that while the DOE’s Office of Environmental Management (EM) is required to follow certain laws, agreements, federal guidelines, and court decisions that establish standards and procedures for the cleanup of hazardous and radioactive waste, the department does not have a framework for making cleanup decisions in a risk-informed manner. The report notes that for more than 20 years, the DOE Inspector General and the GAO, among others, have been recommending that the DOE adopt a risk-informed approach. “By revising EM’s 2017 cleanup policy to establish how EM should apply the essential elements of a risk-informed decision-making framework into its current decision-making requirements and guidance, DOE sites would be better able to implement consistent decision-making

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• Demonstrated safe performance in high-risk environments
• Facility-cleared company that has responded to some of our country’s most challenging and problematic nuclear cleanup situations

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