

annual fee for FY 2003. The NRC plans to re-examine the small entity fees again in FY 2005.

In summary, the NRC is proposing to—

1. Establish rebaselined annual fees for FY 2003;
2. Retain the current reduced fees for small entities.

III. Plain Language

The Presidential Memorandum dated June 1, 1998, entitled, "Plain Language in Government Writing," directed that the Federal government's writing be in plain language (63 FR 31883; June 10, 1998). The NRC requests comments on this proposed rule specifically with respect to the clarity and effectiveness of the language used. Comments on the language used should be sent to the NRC as indicated under the **ADDRESSES** heading.

IV. Voluntary Consensus Standards

The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-113, requires that Federal agencies use technical standards that are developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies unless using such a standard is inconsistent with applicable law or is otherwise impractical. In this proposed rule, the NRC is amending the licensing, inspection, and annual fees charged to its licensees and applicants as necessary to recover approximately 94 percent of its budget authority in FY 2003 as is required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, as amended. This action does not constitute the establishment of a standard that contains generally applicable requirements.

V. Environmental Impact: Categorical Exclusion

The NRC has determined that this proposed rule is the type of action described in categorical exclusion 10 CFR 51.22(c)(1). Therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement has been prepared for the proposed regulation. By its very nature, this regulatory action does not affect the environment and, therefore, no environmental justice issues are raised.

VI. Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

This proposed rule does not contain information collection requirements and, therefore, is not subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

VII. Regulatory Analysis

With respect to 10 CFR part 170, this proposed rule was developed pursuant to Title V of the Independent Offices Appropriation Act of 1952 (IOAA) (31 U.S.C. 9701) and the Commission's fee guidelines. When developing these guidelines the Commission took into account guidance provided by the U.S. Supreme Court on March 4, 1974, in *National Cable Television Association, Inc. v. United States*, 415 U.S. 36 (1974) and *Federal Power Commission v. New England Power Company*, 415 U.S. 345 (1974). In these decisions, the Court held that the IOAA authorizes an agency to charge fees for special benefits rendered to identifiable persons measured by the "value to the recipient" of the agency service. The meaning of the IOAA was further clarified on December 16, 1976, by four decisions of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia: *National Cable Television Association v. Federal Communications Commission*, 554 F.2d 1094 (D.C. Cir. 1976); *National Association of Broadcasters v. Federal Communications Commission*, 554 F.2d 1118 (D.C. Cir. 1976); *Electronic Industries Association v. Federal Communications Commission*, 554 F.2d 1109 (D.C. Cir. 1976); and *Capital Cities Communication, Inc. v. Federal Communications Commission*, 554 F.2d 1135 (D.C. Cir. 1976). The Commission's fee guidelines were developed based on these legal decisions.

The Commission's fee guidelines were upheld on August 24, 1979, by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in *Mississippi Power and Light Co. v. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission*, 601 F.2d 223 (5th Cir. 1979), *cert. denied*, 444 U.S. 1102 (1980). This court held that—

- (1) The NRC had the authority to recover the full cost of providing services to identifiable beneficiaries;
- (2) The NRC could properly assess a fee for the costs of providing routine inspections necessary to ensure a licensee's compliance with the Atomic Energy Act and with applicable regulations;
- (3) The NRC could charge for costs incurred in conducting environmental reviews required by NEPA;
- (4) The NRC properly included the costs of uncontested hearings and of administrative and technical support services in the fee schedule;
- (5) The NRC could assess a fee for renewing a license to operate a low-level radioactive waste burial site; and
- (6) The NRC's fees were not arbitrary or capricious.

With respect to 10 CFR part 171, on November 5, 1990, the Congress passed

Pub. L. 101-508, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA-90), which required that, for FYs 1991 through 1995, approximately 100 percent of the NRC budget authority be recovered through the assessment of fees. OBRA-90 was subsequently amended to extend the 100 percent fee recovery requirement through FY 2000. The FY 2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act amended OBRA-90 to decrease the NRC's fee recovery amount by 2 percent per year beginning in FY 2001, until the fee recovery amount is 90 percent in FY 2005. The NRC's fee recovery amount for FY 2003 is 94 percent. To comply with this statutory requirement and in accordance with § 171.13, the NRC is publishing the proposed amount of the FY 2003 annual fees for reactor licensees, fuel cycle licensees, materials licensees, and holders of Certificates of Compliance, registrations of sealed source and devices and QA program approvals, and Government agencies. OBRA-90, consistent with the accompanying Conference Committee Report, and the amendments to OBRA-90, provides that—

- (1) The annual fees be based on approximately 94 percent of the Commission's FY 2003 budget of \$584.6 million less the amounts collected from part 170 fees and funds directly appropriated from the NWF to cover the NRC's high level waste program;
- (2) The annual fees shall, to the maximum extent practicable, have a reasonable relationship to the cost of regulatory services provided by the Commission; and
- (3) The annual fees be assessed to those licensees the Commission, in its discretion, determines can fairly, equitably, and practicably contribute to their payment.

10 CFR part 171, which established annual fees for operating power reactors effective October 20, 1986 (51 FR 33224; September 18, 1986), was challenged and upheld in its entirety in *Florida Power and Light Company v. United States*, 846 F.2d 765 (D.C. Cir. 1988), *cert. denied*, 490 U.S. 1045 (1989). Further, the NRC's FY 1991 annual fee rule methodology was upheld by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in *Allied Signal v. NRC*, 988 F.2d 146 (D.C. Cir. 1993).

VIII. Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The NRC is required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, as amended, to recover approximately 94 percent of its FY 2003 budget authority through the assessment of user fees. This act further requires that the NRC establish a schedule of charges that