

answering questions by e-mail.

“For the CNSC, regulatory collaboration on BWRX-300 has been particularly successful in adding efficiency and rigor to our technical review of this technology,” he continued.

While the joint work so far had been mostly reviewing topical reports, an early stage in licensing, Holland said, “We anticipate opportunities to extend our approach to joint reviews and leveraging reviews of another regulator to broader applications.”

Regulatory coordination would appear to make sense as the industry goes international. Westinghouse, based near Pittsburgh, Pa., is now owned by a Canadian turnaround firm and a uranium mining company. GE Hitachi’s BWRX reactor, planned for Ontario, will be built in part using components manufactured in Canada by a subsidiary of American company BWX Technologies.

And the collaboration on evaluating the BWRX and other designs makes sense from a regulatory standpoint. But political factors are creating challenges, regardless of what the regulators do. TVA’s role, like so much else in the last few weeks, has been cast into doubt by the change of administration in the White House. Jeffrey J. Lyash, president and CEO since 2019, has been a main backer of the construction of a BWRX-300, but following Trump’s inauguration, Lyash announced that he will retire this year. (Trump had clashed with Lyash during Trump’s first term.)

However, TVA has already invested substantial effort in studying the BWRX-300 for its Clinch River site.

And a trade war with Canada has increased agitation there for using their homegrown product, the

CANDU, instead of a U.S. import. But reactors built in Canada would have substantial content produced in that country.

That is another reason joint licensing of a design is unlikely; host country rules for “local content” mean that especially for SMRs that are factory built, key

components would be sourced from different places. ☒

Matt Wald is an independent energy writer and consultant. He is a former policy analyst at the Nuclear Energy Institute and for decades was the energy reporter at the New York Times.



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