Applications to extend operation of aging Japan reactors put on hold

The Associated Press

TOKYO, Jan. 23 (Kyodo) — Japan's nuclear regulatory authority on Wednesday decided not to accept applications from utilities seeking to extend the operation of reactors beyond 30 years under existing procedures, given that new regulations will be introduced in July.

To address concerns about aging reactors, nuclear power plant operators have been asked to conduct safety assessments of reactors that are set to operate beyond 30 years and compile a 10-year maintenance plan in seeking an extension.

But the Nuclear Regulation Authority, a new body launched in September last year, is in the process of overhauling the country's nuclear regulations in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi complex disaster. It plans to require existing reactors to clear the new safety standards once they come into force.

"We want utilities to wait to submit the applications," NRA Chairman Shunichi Tanaka said during a meeting of the authority members, also noting the need to discuss details of a new regulation that the country has decided to introduce, limiting the reactors' operation to 40 years in principle.

The latest development comes as applications to extend operations of four reactors, including the No. 1 units at Chugoku Electric Power Co.'s Shimane plant and Kyushu Electric Power Co.'s Sendai plant, must be submitted by July.

None of the reactors is currently online.

Source URL (retrieved on *05/24/2013 - 1:13pm*):
http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2013/01/applications-extend-operation-aging-japan-reactors-put-hold