

NRC Grants Holtec Exemption to Begin Early Site Construction Activities for Pioneer Units 1 and 2

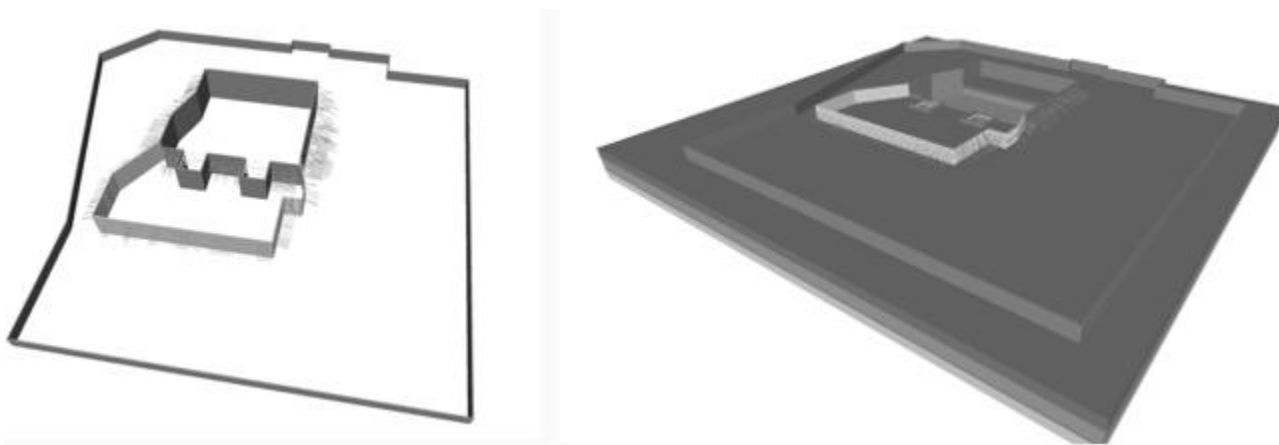
Approval advances support of excavation, cutoff-wall, and ground-improvement activities at the Palisades Energy Center

COVERT TOWNSHIP, Michigan - The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) granted Holtec an exemption on [August 28, 2026](#), authorizing installation of permanent support-of-excavation (SOE) and cutoff-wall systems for Pioneer Units 1 and 2 before issuance of a Limited Work Authorization (LWA). Holtec submitted the request on [December 31, 2025](#), as part of Part 1 of the phased Construction Permit Application (CPA), which included the LWA R0 application and the Environmental Report (ER). The approval marks an important milestone toward initiating early site construction at the Palisades Energy Center in Covert, Michigan.

The authorized systems include diaphragm walls, soldier-pile soil-mix walls, and perimeter cutoff walls, with tiebacks or struts as needed. They will stabilize excavations, protect adjacent structures and utilities, manage groundwater pressures, and support safe construction. The SOE walls will be retired in place, with the space between the walls and permanent structures backfilled to grade.

The approval enables Holtec to advance SOE and cutoff-wall (COW) installation, excavation, dewatering, and required ground-improvement activities for the Nuclear Island (NI), Turbine Island (TI), and Balance of Plant (BOP) structures. These early works will establish the stable excavation and foundation conditions needed to support and accelerate subsequent plant construction following LWA approval.

Site Context



Planned Excavation Configuration (illustrative view of the permanent SOE system)



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Before Early Construction (Left) and Illustrative Future Construction (Right)

NRC Environmental and Safety Findings

On [August 25, 2026](#), the NRC issued an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, concluding that the authorized activities would not significantly affect the human environment or historic properties and would not require a separate environmental impact statement for the exemption.

Under 10 CFR 50.12, the Commission determined that the exemption is authorized by law, presents no undue risk to public health and safety, is consistent with the common defense and security, and is supported by special circumstances. The NRC found reasonable assurance that installation and retirement of the SOE walls would not adversely affect the safe design or siting of Pioneer Units 1 and 2.

Holtec will perform geologic mapping and data collection during excavation, notify the NRC when the excavation is open for inspection, and account for the retired SOE walls in soil-structure interaction analyses. The exemption authorizes the specified early SOE work but does not constitute a commitment to issue an LWA or construction permit.

The approval reflects Holtec's disciplined, risk-informed approach to advancing the Palisades project and marks another step toward deploying 680 megawatts of clean, reliable energy through Pioneer Units 1 and 2.

Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This release contains forward-looking statements regarding planned construction activities for and anticipated deployment of Pioneer Units 1 and 2. Such statements involve risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond Holtec's control, and speak only as of the date of this release. Holtec undertakes no obligation to update them unless required by law and cautions readers not to place undue reliance on them.

About Holtec Nuclear Corporation

Holtec is a U.S.-headquartered, multinational technology company focused on clean energy, with its principal business centered on nuclear power generation and an expanding presence in adjacent clean energy generation solutions and long-duration energy storage. The Company is the owner/developer of the SMR-300 advanced small modular reactor featuring passive safety systems and currently expects the first two units to be deployed at the Company-owned Palisades site in Michigan. Holtec is also recommissioning the Palisades nuclear power plant in Michigan, which would be the first commercial nuclear reactor in the United States to be repowered after permanent shutdown. Holtec is the NRC-authorized operator for the Palisades plant.

The Company owns over 200 granted patents as of June 30, 2026, supported by a collection of proprietary processes, internally developed software, and proprietary technical reports, three large U.S.-based manufacturing facilities for nuclear fabrication and operates on five continents. The Company has provided products and services to a client base of more than 150 nuclear reactors worldwide. Holtec's technical capabilities include reactor design, reactor operations, engineering, licensing, manufacturing, construction, commissioning, and decommissioning services. As such, Holtec believes that it is well-positioned to help catalyze the growth of the nuclear power industry in the U.S. and around the world. The Company is also expanding its activities in solar energy and long-duration energy storage technologies intended to enhance renewable energy reliability and complement its SMR-300 product line.



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