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To the Editor:

The Blade's May 21 story about a change in the oversight mechanism for the Davis-Besse nuclear plant misconstrued a comment last year by Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Nils Diaz to suggest that the plant would be under scrutiny by a special oversight panel for three to five years.

The chairman's comment related to the NRC's intention to subject the plant to substantial additional oversight over a three- to five-year period. To be clear, dissolution of the special oversight panel -- a coordinating body -- does not mean the plant will no longer be subject to additional attention by the NRC.

In fact, under NRC orders the plant is being evaluated this year in the areas of operations performance, safety culture, corrective action implementation, safety conscious work environment and engineering. The NRC will also monitor the licensee's performance in the areas of self assessment, problem identification, trending, and progress towards reducing the backlog of maintenance and corrective action items. Even though problem identification and resolution inspections are biennial and the NRC has one scheduled for 2006, we will conduct an additional such inspection in 2005.

Additional oversight for 2006 will be determined at the end of 2005 and will address key problem areas identified in the course of the year. The NRC will be watching Davis-Besse's performance closely, with more scrutiny than normal, for quite some time.

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