



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS PEACH BOTTOM NUCLEAR PLANT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AT PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR JUNE 9 IN DELTA, PA.

The results of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual safety performance assessment for the Peach Bottom nuclear power plant will be the subject of a public meeting on Monday, June 9. There are two operating boiling-water reactors at Peach Bottom, which is located in Delta (York County), Pa., and operated by Exelon Generation Co., LLC.

At 6:30 p.m., NRC staff will meet with representatives of Exelon to discuss the assessment, which covers the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2007, and was documented in a March 3rd letter to the company. The meeting will take place at the Peach Bottom Inn, at 6085 Delta Road in Delta.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's performance during 2007, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

"Through a combination of inspection findings and performance indicators, we are able to develop a comprehensive picture of how nuclear power plants are performing with regard to safety," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "As part of our commitment to make the findings of our reviews accessible to the public, we hold meetings near each plant once a year to share the details of those assessments. We look forward to the opportunity on June 9th to present that information for the Peach Bottom nuclear power plant."

The annual assessment letter for Peach Bottom is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/pb_2007q4.pdf. The notice for the meeting, with agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML080850792. ADAMS is accessible at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV.

When considering nuclear power plant performance, the NRC uses color-coded performance indicators and inspection findings. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

With regard to the six cornerstones, or areas of performance, related to reactor and radiation safety assessed by the NRC, Peach Bottom met all objectives during 2007 and there were no inspection findings that were greater than “green.” However, with respect to the cornerstone encompassing plant security, the NRC issued a “white” (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding in the last quarter of 2007 that pertained to security officer inattentiveness. That finding also had a documented cross-cutting aspect (meaning it could potentially impact more than one performance area) in the area of Safety Conscious Work Environment, or SCWE. SCWE refers to maintaining an environment in which workers feel free to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation. Specifically, the NRC determined that behaviors and interactions within the security organization at the plant did not encourage the free flow of information relating to safety issues.

Exelon has taken multiple steps to address the SCWE concerns, including surveys of site personnel and contractors, continuing training and corrective action effectiveness reviews. The NRC recently completed an inspection of Exelon’s actions to address SCWE issues at Peach Bottom. Based on the results, the agency has concluded that the company has a reasonably complete understanding of the issues and has implemented an effective SCWE at the site. This inspection was discussed at a public meeting on April 15 and the associated inspection report, which was issued on May 27, is available in ADAMS under accession number ML081490058.

In response to the “white” inspection finding, the NRC conducted an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) review at Peach Bottom, as well as a follow-up inspection, to evaluate the circumstances of the security officer inattentiveness, assess the company’s corrective actions and determine the significance of the issue. The NRC also issued a Confirmatory Action letter to Exelon on Oct. 19, 2007, to formalize the company’s agreement to complete certain actions in relation to the inattentive officers. Further, the agency’s Executive Director for Operations approved enhanced NRC oversight of Peach Bottom, via additional inspections, until the agency is satisfied the issues have been comprehensively addressed.

Inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at Peach Bottom to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with emergency preparedness, radiological protection and the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Current performance information for Peach Bottom Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PB2/pb2_chart.html. Current performance information for Peach Bottom Unit 3 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PB3/pb3_chart.html.

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