



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO CONTINUE ENHANCED OVERSIGHT OF INDIAN POINT IN 2009

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will continue to perform additional inspections at the Indian Point nuclear power plant throughout 2009 to ensure issues associated with on-site groundwater contamination are being properly addressed. Entergy Nuclear Northeast owns and operates Indian Point, which is located in Buchanan (Westchester County), N.Y.

Overall, the NRC considers Entergy's operation of Indian Point to be acceptable, with both units at the site currently in the category of oversight that would typically result in a baseline, or routine, level of inspections. The agency's Action Matrix, which can be found at http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html, shows both Indian Point 2 and 3 as currently listed in the "Licensee Response Column," or a category of plants normally warranting routine oversight.

However, NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins, in a request to the agency's Executive Director for Operations, Bill Borchardt, wrote that a higher level of oversight is needed for Indian Point so the staff can "appropriately monitor licensee efforts to address the groundwater contamination issue." In September 2005, the NRC was informed by Entergy that low levels of radioactive contamination were found in the vicinity of cracks identified on the exterior of the Indian Point 2 spent fuel pool building. Subsequently, groundwater at the site was found to be contaminated with radioactive leakage from both the Indian Point 2 spent fuel pool and the decommissioned Indian Point 1 spent fuel pool.

"To date, Entergy has demonstrated satisfactory performance in addressing the contaminated groundwater conditions by completing a comprehensive site characterization, enhancing the sensitivity of its environmental monitoring program, determining the sources of contamination, and establishing remedial actions," Mr. Collins wrote. "... However, some processes and procedures, important to the overall effectiveness and quality of Entergy's long-term monitoring program, were not sufficiently developed and implemented in time for the NRC to assess effectiveness in CY 2008."

18. Mr. Borchardt approved the formal request, in the form of a “deviation memo,” on Dec.

The deviation memo marks a continuation of additional NRC oversight at Indian Point that was first approved in October 2005 and then renewed in December 2006 and December 2007, providing more resources for inspecting the plant during those years.

In the December 2007 memo, plans were included for the NRC staff to continue with reviews of ongoing work on the installation of a new siren system for the plant. However, that system was placed into service in August 2008 and reliability tests were successfully conducted in September, October and November. Therefore, the criteria for the closeout of enhanced inspections involving that system have been met.

A copy of the deviation memo will be posted on the NRC web site at:
<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/indian-point-issues.html> .

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