



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406
Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. I-10-008
Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

March 22, 2010
E-mail: OPA1@NRC.GOV

NRC TO HOLD OPEN HOUSE ON MARCH 25 IN OSWEGO, N.Y. TO DISCUSS 2009 ASSESSMENTS OF NINE MILE POINT, FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR PLANTS

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an open house on Thursday, March 25 regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Nine Mile Point and James A. FitzPatrick nuclear power plants during 2009.

The open house will run from 4 to 6 p.m. at Scriba Town Hall, located at 42 Creamery Road in Oswego, N.Y. It will give members of the public an opportunity to learn first-hand from NRC staff members about performance at the plants during 2009, as well as NRC oversight of the facilities. Unlike a standard meeting format, the setting will allow citizens to discuss plant-related topics on a one-on-one basis with NRC inspectors assigned to the plants and their NRC Region I supervisors.

Nine Mile Point, which is the site of two boiling-water reactors, and FitzPatrick, which is the site of a single boiling-water reactor, are located adjacent to each other in Scriba (Oswego County), N.Y. Constellation Energy, LLC, owns and operates Nine Mile Point while Entergy Nuclear Northeast owns and operates FitzPatrick.

Overall, the Nine Mile Point 1 & 2 reactors and the FitzPatrick reactor operated safely during 2009.

At the conclusion of last year, as assessed through the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators that were other than "green" or any inspection findings that were "greater than green" for the Nine Mile Point 1 and FitzPatrick units. Therefore, for the rest of 2010, those units will receive the normal, very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well.

However, with respect to Nine Mile Point 2, one "white" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding was identified in an NRC inspection report issued on Nov. 24, 2009. Specifically, the NRC identified issues involving procedural adequacy and the insufficient

addressing of root causes that led to reliability challenges for service water pumps at the plant. (The service water system draws water from Lake Ontario, pumps it to plant systems for cooling purposes and then returns it to the waterway. The service water does not come into contact with any radioactive steam or water during this process.)

The inspection finding was identified during an NRC supplemental inspection conducted in response to an earlier “white” performance indicator for equipment performance at Nine Mile Point 2. Specifically, in the fourth quarter of 2008, the plant’s performance indicator for Mitigating Systems Performance Index for Cooling Water Systems crossed the threshold from “green” to “white.” This was a result of a combination of availability challenges associated with service water pump maintenance activities and reliability challenges associated with the introduction of foreign material into the service water pump suction in November 2008.

The performance indicator returned to “green” in the fourth quarter of 2009, but based on the November 2009 inspection finding, additional NRC oversight will continue until the agency is satisfied Constellation fully understands the root causes of the problems and has taken adequate steps to prevent a recurrence. Until that occurs, Nine Mile Point 2 will remain in the “Regulatory Response Column” of the NRC’s Action Matrix: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html . The NRC plans another supplemental inspection to evaluate the company’s progress in this area.

“As is warranted under our Reactor Oversight Process, Nine Mile Point 2 will continue to receive additional scrutiny from the NRC in 2010 until the issues associated with the service water system have been appropriately addressed,” NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. “Our inspections clearly indicated that there was more work that needed to be done in this area.”

In 2009, the NRC devoted approximately 7,100 hours of inspection to the Nine Mile Point reactors, including two major team inspections, and about 4,600 hours of inspection to the FitzPatrick reactor.

Routine inspections are carried out by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to Nine Mile Point and the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to FitzPatrick, as well as by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas at Nine Mile Point to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness, operator licensing, permanent plant modifications, security and radiation protection. Among the areas at FitzPatrick to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, emergency preparedness, radiation safety, security and the plant’s problem identification and resolution program. An engineering team inspection will also be conducted at FitzPatrick this year.

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to gauge plant performance. The colors start with “green,” representing very low safety significance, to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year; during the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings

and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC's web site, www.nrc.gov , each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The meetings are in keeping with the agency's commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment letter for the Nine Mile Point plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/nmp_2009q4.pdf . The annual assessment letter for the FitzPatrick plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/fitz_2009q4.pdf . The notice for the open house is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML100670141. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> . Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resources@NRC.GOV .

Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP1/nmp1_chart.html . Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP2/nmp2_chart.html . Current performance information for FitzPatrick is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FITZ/fitz_chart.html .

#