



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa.

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>

No. I-05-013

Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

March 22, 2005

Email: opal@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PEACH BOTTOM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Company on Tuesday, March 29, to discuss the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Peach Bottom nuclear power plant. The period of performance to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2004.

Exelon operates the twin-reactor plant, which is located near Delta, Pa.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at the Peach Bottom Inn, 6085 Delta Road in Delta. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Peach Bottom plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/pb_2004q4.pdf. The meeting notice, with the meeting agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML050680522. ADAMS is accessible via the agency's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available by contacting the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737 or by e-mail at PDR@nrc.gov.

Overall, the Peach Bottom plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors

start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Because all of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Peach Bottom during 2004 were determined to be “green,” the plant will receive a baseline level of inspections during the upcoming assessment period.

However, one of the performance indicators for Peach Bottom Unit 2 – the number of scrams, or shutdowns, with loss of normal heat removal – is still being evaluated by the NRC staff. Once that review is completed, an assessment follow-up letter may be issued.

The Peach Bottom plant did have one “white” inspection finding and one “white” performance indicator during the first three quarters of 2004. The inspection finding resulted from an inoperable Unit 2 emergency diesel generator, while the performance indicator change stemmed from Unit 2 exceeding the number of unplanned scrams per 7,000 critical hours of reactor operation. The NRC staff performed supplemental inspections to assess the company’s response to both issues and, after finding satisfactory progress in addressing them, determined they should be closed out.

In our mid-cycle letter dated Aug. 30, 2004, the NRC advised Exelon that a “substantive cross-cutting issue,” a performance issue touching multiple program areas, still existed in the area of Problem Identification and Resolution involving inadequate corrective action for known equipment problems. The NRC staff has since determined the issue no longer exists due to the reduction in the frequency of findings related to this area.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency response and preparedness, radiological safety and problem identification and resolution.

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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