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Press Conference on Y2K Issues  
Statement by

The Honorable Greta Joy Dicus  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

National Press Club

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Good Morning.

I am pleased to be here today on behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to discuss with you our understanding of the Year 2000 readiness of the U.S. nuclear industry and the agency's internal Year 2000 readiness preparations.

I have favorable news to report. Based upon our review of the responses from the nuclear power industry concerning Year 2000 readiness, our independent inspection efforts at all 103 operating units, and our ongoing regulatory oversight activities, we have concluded that the Year 2000 problem will not adversely affect the continued safe operation, or if necessary, the safe shut down of commercial nuclear power plants. We have reached this conclusion after many months of intense effort. Starting as early as December 1996, we began to engage our industry stakeholders on the development of guidance to deal with the Year 2000 problem. We endorsed these industry guidelines with the understanding that audits and inspections of our licensees' programs would enable us to assess independently the effectiveness of Year 2000 readiness at each nuclear power plant.

Regarding our highest priority—the uninterrupted performance of plant safety systems—all nuclear power plants report that their efforts are complete, and that no remaining Y2K-related problems exist that could directly affect the performance of safety systems or the capability for safe shutdown. While some plants have additional work remaining on systems not affecting reactor safety, the entire industry is on target to complete the necessary modifications to all administrative, monitoring, and power-related systems prior to January 1, 2000. Our audits, inspection reviews, and other oversight activities have not identified any issues that would preclude licensees from achieving Year 2000 readiness. We will continue to monitor nuclear power plant readiness as Year 2000 approaches.

NRC internal Year 2000 readiness is also complete. As of February 5, 1999, all of NRC's systems have been examined and, as needed, fixed or replaced with regard to the Year 2000 problem. In addition, in the unlikely event that Year 2000 problems affect one or more of our licensees, we have instituted an Agency Contingency Plan that provides for, among other things, around-the-clock staffing of our Emergency Operations Center.

The NRC remains committed to keeping our stakeholders and the general public informed. We have posted our generic communications, audits, and reports on our external Internet web site for access by members of the public.

In conclusion, we have been active in addressing the Year 2000 problem both internally and with our licensees. We will continue to work, both nationally and internationally, to promote awareness and provide assistance in addressing nuclear safety issues related to the Year 2000 computer problem. I would be happy to answer any question you may have at this time.