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SEABROOK PLANT RATED "SUPERIOR" IN THREE CATEGORIES,
"GOOD" IN FOURTH IN NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Seabrook Nuclear Power Station received performance ratings of "superior" in plant operations, engineering and plant support, and "good" in maintenance in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) of the facility.

The SALP report was sent June 13 to Northeast Utilities Service Company (NU), which operates the plant near Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It evaluates the plant's performance from January 8, 1995, through May 4 of this year.

NRC and NU officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 1 p.m. June 26, at the Science and Nature Center at the site. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

NRC systematic assessment reports rate licensees in four functional areas - plant operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support - and assign Category 1, 2 or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or adequate. The report on Seabrook gives the plant a Category 1 rating in plant operations, engineering and plant support, and Category 2 in maintenance. Performance improved in plant operations from "good" to "superior" during the most recent evaluation.

In a letter to the licensee, Region I Administrator Thomas T. Martin said: "Overall, NRC observed safe and very effective performance at Seabrook Station during the assessment period, with a good focus on programmatic and performance improvement." Mr. Martin added that NRC has not observed any impact on safe operation at Seabrook Station from the permanent and temporary resource allocations to other sites within Northeast Utilities but he said NRC will continue to monitor Seabrook's performance.

Mr. Martin had these comments on Seabrook's performance in the four rated categories:

PLANT OPERATIONS

"Operations management provided very effective oversight with a primary emphasis on safety. Operations personnel maintained a clear, safety-conscious questioning attitude. Control room operations were well controlled with good communications and effective oversight, which resulted in excellent responses to plant transients and several automatic system isolations. Nevertheless, there were several minor performance-related examples of operations not being completely effective in meeting programmatic and management expectations."

ENGINEERING

"Overall excellent performance continued in the engineering area. Engineering demonstrated a strong safety perspective as evidenced by thorough safety evaluations. Knowledgeable engineering personnel, who were active in various nuclear industry groups, were implementing well-developed engineering programs and procedures. Plant design modifications were of high quality. Engineering management demonstrated effective control and prioritization of engineering work backlog. The engineering organization performed comprehensive evaluations of emergent operational issues. However, in some instances, engineering resolutions of some longstanding problems were not timely or fully effective."

PLANT SUPPORT

"Performance in the radiation protection area was a licensee strength. Continued effective plant chemistry greatly helped in maintaining a low radiological source term, which contributes substantially to plant maintainability and routine operational activities. Excellent performances in the radiological effluent and environmental monitoring programs were again noted. Performance in the emergency preparedness area continued to be excellent. The security program was effectively carried out. However, NRC found a number of weaknesses in fire protection program implementation, and concluded that fire protection performance, albeit adequate, is not consistent with other plant support functions."

MAINTENANCE

"The Maintenance Department made significant improvements during the assessment period through enthusiastic support of self-assessment, problem identification, and problem resolution processes. Strong management involvement fostered the performance of maintenance activities in a safe and controlled manner. Safety-related surveillance activities were carefully controlled, coordinated, and implemented. Notwithstanding, several programmatic weaknesses were evident during planning, development, and implementation of on-line maintenance which

resulted in unnecessary challenges to plant operations."

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SALP reports are available on the NRC's internet web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>) and by e-mail subscription. To receive SALP reports by e-mail as they are issued, send an e-mail to listproc@nrc.gov with the following message: subscribe salp yourfirstname yourlastname.