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NRC SCHEDULES OPEN HOUSE FOR MAY 23 TO DISCUSS FERMI NUCLEAR POWER PLANT PERFORMANCE AND NRC OVERSIGHT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials have scheduled an open house for Monday, May 23, in Monroe, Mich., to discuss with local residents the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Fermi Nuclear Power Station and other NRC oversight activities.

The open house is informal and will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. EDT at the Board of Commissioners' Chambers, Monroe County Courthouse, 125 E. Second St., Monroe. Interested members of the public are invited to attend any time during the two-hour session. The NRC's two resident inspectors and other staff members will be available to discuss the Fermi plant's performance and other issues.

The Fermi plant, which has one operating unit, Unit 2, is operated by Detroit Edison Co. It is located near Monroe. Fermi Unit 1 is in decommissioning status with all reactor fuel removed from the site.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Fermi facility and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," said NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with members of the local community. The goal of this open house is to explain how the NRC works to protect people and the environment and answer questions from residents about nuclear regulation."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III office to plant officials addressed the performance of the plant during 2010 and will serve as the basis for the open house discussion. It is available on the NRC website at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/ferm_2010q4.pdf

Overall, the NRC found that the Fermi facility operated safely in 2010.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All performance indicators and inspection findings for Fermi during 2010 were determined to be "green." Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance.

During 2010 NRC inspectors identified several instances where the plant failed to maintain up-to-date design information – which was considered a “cross-cutting issue” because it affected more than one area of the plant. Detroit Edison adopted corrective actions. The NRC does not have a continuing concern, but will continue to monitor the utility’s improvement activities.

Fermi will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime required for plants that are operating well and require no additional oversight. Inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. In addition to the day-to-day inspections performed by the resident inspectors, specific areas of plant operations to be inspected include radiation protection, plant modifications, problem identification and resolution, in-service inspection activities for safety systems, fire protection, spent reactor fuel storage, and emergency preparedness.

The most current performance information for Fermi is available on the NRC website at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FERM2/ferm2_chart.html.

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