



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT THE MEETING TO DISCUSS SAFETY CHALLENGES OF THE BROWN'S FERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Good morning. The Commission meets today to discuss the safety challenges experienced by the Brown's Ferry nuclear power plant and the steps being taken to strengthen the safety of the plant.

In May 2011, Brown's Ferry Unit 1 was placed in Column 4 of the Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) Action Matrix after it received a red finding when a reactor-core cooling valve failed. Under the ROP, the NRC will place a plant in Column 4 only after identifying highly safety significant issues. That designation triggers heightened NRC inspections to ensure that the needed remedial measures are taken.

This is not the only significant issue the Brown's Ferry plant has experienced in recent years. In 2009, all three units at Brown's Ferry were placed in Column 3 after receiving a yellow finding for fire protection issues. Given this recent history of issues, I'm sure that we can all agree that we want to see the plant perform more safely. To achieve that, there needs to be a strong commitment from the licensee's entire organization—from its senior leadership to its front-line engineers—to do what needs to be done for safety.

Less than two weeks ago, I visited the Brown's Ferry plant with Senator Lamar Alexander to assess the plant's progress in addressing its equipment reliability issues. While some steps have been taken, there still remains a great deal of work for the licensee to perform. In the presentations from the staff and the licensees, we will hear in greater detail about exactly what needs to be done. It is important that we stay on top of this issue in order to ensure this matter is not indicative of broader issues at the plant.

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