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Tel. 301-504-2240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, May 19, 1992)

NRC APPROVES SEABROOK LICENSE TRANSFER

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved amendments to the license for the Seabrook Nuclear Generating Station authorizing the transfer of operations and partial ownership of Seabrook from Public Service Company of New Hampshire to newly-formed subsidiaries of Northeast Utilities Company.

The NRC staff is completing work on the licensing package, including an order, amendments, new license conditions and a safety evaluation report. The transfer will not become effective until the staff action is completed in about two weeks.

The Commission approved the action after receiving written assurances from Northeast Utilities on May 13, 1992, that, among other commitments, adequate financial resources will be provided for nuclear operations at Seabrook as well as at the Millstone and Haddam Neck nuclear power plants in Connecticut. The Commission requested the company to provide these written commitments during a May 11 public meeting. Copies of the Northeast Utilities' letters of May 13, 1992 are in the NRC's Public Document Room in Washington, D.C.

In a letter today to Northeast Utilities (NU), Dr. Thomas Murley, Director of NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, said "...These plans and commitments appear to be responsive to the Commission request, and indicate that resources projected to be applied to improving the safety performance of NU's Connecticut nuclear plants will not be reduced until the NRC staff is apprised, on a timely basis, of those projected changes and the reason for those changes..."

Northeast Utilities' commitments for performance improvement are described in the attached letter from Dr. Murley to the company.

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Attachment

Docket No. 50-443

Mr. William B. Ellis
Chief Executive Officer
Chairman of the Board
Northeast Utilities
P. O. Box 270
Hartford, CT 06141-0270

Dear Mr. Ellis,

As you are aware, the NRC staff has recommended that the Commission approve amendments to the Seabrook Nuclear Generating Station license authorizing the transfer of operations and partial ownership of Seabrook from the Public Service Company of New Hampshire to newly formed subsidiaries of the Northeast Utilities Company. During the Commission meeting on the proposed transfer on May 11, 1992, you were asked to provide the Commission with written assurances that adequate financial resources would be provided for nuclear operations at Seabrook as well as at the Millstone and Haddam Neck facilities. The Commission has received the requested plans and commitments. These plans and commitments appear to be responsive to the Commission request, and indicate that the resources projected to be applied to improving the safety performance of NU's Connecticut nuclear plants will not be reduced until the NRC Staff is apprised, on a timely basis, of those projected changes and the reason for those changes. Moreover, you committed to:

- Complete Phase II of the PEP in June 1992.
- Summarize the results in a docketed letter to the NRC promptly after it is completed.
- Ensure that the PEP is acceptable to the NRC.
- Authorize the addition of any resources necessary to implement the PEP.
- Provide periodic updates to the Staff on the progress of PEP implementation.
- Keep the NRC Staff apprised on a timely basis of any significant changes in the O&M and capital budgets and projections presented in the attachment for calendar years 1992-1995, including an explanation for any such changes.

We find these commitments to be acceptable.

Based upon a review of the NRC staff recommendations and the information provided by Northeast Utilities, the Public Service Company of New Hampshire and the Seabrook Joint Owners, the Commission has authorized the staff to

Mr. William B. Ellis

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issue the necessary licensing documents to approve the Seabrook transfer. The staff is now preparing the necessary formal documentation, and it is emphasized that the transfer does not become effective until the staff has issued the appropriate amendments to the Seabrook license. We expect to complete this action within the next several weeks.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Murley, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: T. C. Feigenbaum, NHY
R. J. Grossi, Seabrook
Joint Owners