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No. 95-138

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Thursday, November 9, 1995)

NRC STAFF AUTHORIZES FULL REACTOR CORE OFFLOAD  
AT MILLSTONE UNIT 1

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has authorized Northeast Nuclear Energy Co. to transfer all of the fuel from the reactor core to the plant's spent fuel pool during normal refueling at Millstone Nuclear Power Station Unit 1 near New London and Waterford, Connecticut.

An NRC-approved amendment to the plant's operating license sanctions this practice, provided newly specified safeguards are followed.

The new Millstone Unit 1 license amendment includes a provision that refueling operations cannot begin until at least 100 hours after the reactor has been shut down. New license conditions also specify that the spent fuel pool — into which all fuel assemblies would be moved — be maintained at a temperature no higher than 140 degrees Fahrenheit. A further requirement is that two redundant trains of the reactor shutdown cooling system be operable during normal refueling operations. To satisfy this requirement, Northeast has modified the plant so that either train of the reactor shutdown cooling system is available to be cross-tied to the spent fuel pool cooling system.

Northeast proposed these safeguards and informed the NRC of its plant modifications to support a request for a license amendment submitted on July 28 and supplemented in September and October. As part of its review, the NRC staff has independently verified the calculations and other data Northeast used as the technical basis for the proposed license change. Accordingly, the staff has concluded that the amendment would not cause a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

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