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NRC RATES DIABLO CANYON NUCLEAR PLANT
`GOOD' AND `SUPERIOR' IN REPORT

The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant has received performance ratings of ``good'' in plant operations, engineering and maintenance and ``superior'' in plant support in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance.

The SALP report was issued on Sept. 13 to the Pacific Gas and Electric Co., operator of the twin-reactor facility near Avila Beach, Calif. It evaluates the plant's performance for the period from Sept. 1, 1994, through Aug. 17 of this year.

NRC and PG&E officials will discuss the report at a meeting at 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 10, at the PG&E Community Center in San Luis Obispo. The meeting will be open to the public for observation; NRC officials will be available afterwards for questions.

SALP reports rate nuclear plants in four functional areas -- plant operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support, and assign ratings of Category 1, 2 or 3, reflecting superior, good or adequate performance, respectively.

In the previous SALP report, in September 1994, all four functional areas at Diablo Canyon had received Category 1 ratings of ``superior.''

In a letter to PG&E, L. Joe Callan, Regional Administrator of NRC Region IV in Arlington, Texas, said that the most pronounced decline in performance occurred in the areas of operations and engineering. As a result, greater management attention will be required to regain superior performance in those two of the three areas in which ratings declined to ``good.''

Mr. Callan said that Diablo Canyon continued to have strong

programs and a well qualified, capable staff. However, he said that the three-member SALP Board observed that a common contributor to the decline in performance was Diablo management's ``loss of focus on the initiatives and high expectations essential for sustaining the superior performance that Diablo Canyon has achieved so frequently in the past.''

``In our view, this common contributor was manifested by the inconsistent understanding and implementation of plant management's expectations by supervision and plant personnel,' Mr. Callan said in his letter. ``This adversely affected consistency of performance during this SALP performance.''

In the operations area, operators continued to perform well when challenged by significant plant events. However, a decline in performance during routine operations resulted in various problems, including adherence to procedures and configuration control (the control of systems and equipment as they operate at a given time).

Engineering demonstrated excellent performance in its ability to identify problems, but did not always promptly and effectively resolve the problems. In maintenance, performance in maintaining the material condition of safety-related equipment was excellent. However, maintenance activities affecting non-nuclear equipment resulted in challenges to both units.

The area of plant support retained its rating of superior, although some problems with security access control were noted.

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EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office. It is also available in electronic format on the NRC Office of Public Affairs Internet home page at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>.