

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
101 Marietta Street, N.W.
Suite 2900
Atlanta, GA 30323

No:II-97-21

FOR IMMEDIATE

RELEASE

Contact: Ken Clark (404) 331-5503
Roger Hannah (404) 331-7878

(Tuesday, March 4,
1997)

NRC STAFF RAISES WATTS BAR SALP RATING

Plant Support Category Raised from Good To Superior

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has revised a Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report appraisal at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Watts Bar nuclear power plant near Spring City, Tennessee from a Category 2 (good) to a Category 1 (superior) in the area of Plant Support.

The NRC's original Watts Bar SALP report, discussed in a public meeting at the site last January 7, rated the plant as Category 1 (superior) in the areas of Maintenance and Engineering and as Category 2 (good) in Operations and Plant Support.

In a letter to TVA's Chief Nuclear Officer, Oliver D. Kingsley, dated March 3, Luis A. Reyes, administrator of the NRC's Atlanta regional office, said the NRC staff made the change after careful review of a TVA letter dated January 23 which provided the NRC with information TVA considered relevant to support the view that overall performance in Plant Support, which includes radioactive effluents and waste, plant chemistry, emergency preparedness, security, fire protection and housekeeping, merited a superior rating.

Reyes said plant security, considered adequate in the original NRC evaluation, underwent several TVA initiatives during the evaluation period to address problems associated with emergency contingencies and security equipment and that the problems did not reoccur.

"After considering all relevant information," he said, "the (SALP) Board determined that Plant Support area performance was more appropriately characterized at the Category 1 level."

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