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Region III Office of Public Affairs
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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT DAVIS-BESSE NUCLEAR PLANT IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, located near Port Clinton, Ohio.

The review covered the time period from January 1997 through January 31.

In a letter to FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company, which operates the plant, Geoff Grant, Division Director in the NRC's Region III Office, said, "Overall, performance at Davis-Besse was acceptable. However, the operational performance of the unit changed from a condition where operators were rarely challenged during the several previous assessment periods to one in which operators were challenged by a number of events during this assessment period. The organization was well-equipped to handle minor emerging problems during routine plant operations."

He continued, "After the series of two plant trips and a turbine runback occurred in October, immediate actions were taken to augment the work control process, review the collective significance of the events, and develop a long range plan to improve performance. Since the runback, the plant has been operated very conservatively and a methodical approach to scheduling, preparing, and executing work has been implemented. These actions have been initially effective as the plant has been operated event-free since mid-October."

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region III Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

Plant performance reviews are an interim measure NRC is using to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of License Performance (SALP) process until a new assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every

12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection findings. This program will be tested at eight plants beginning in June and will be extended to all plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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