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NRC STAFF RATES FERMI "SUPERIOR" IN PLANT SUPPORT AND
"GOOD" IN OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND ENGINEERING

The Fermi Nuclear Power Station, operated by Detroit Edison Company, has received performance ratings of "superior" in plant support and "good" in operations, maintenance, and engineering, the four areas of review in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report for the facility. The plant is near Monroe, Michigan.

The assessment covers the period from March 31, 1996, through November 7 of last year.

The NRC staff and Detroit Edison Company officials will discuss the evaluation at a meeting set for 10 a.m., Tuesday, January 13, in the Monroe County Courthouse, 106 E. First Street in Monroe, Michigan. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

NRC SALP reports rate utilities in four functional areas -- plant operations, maintenance, engineering, and plant support -- and assign ratings of Category 1, 2, or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas is superior, good or acceptable. The report on Fermi gives the plant a "Category 1" rating -- indicating superior performance -- in plant support and a "Category 2" rating -- indicating good performance -- in operations, maintenance, and engineering.

NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach, in a letter to the utility, noted that "the conduct of nuclear activities at the Enrico Fermi 2 station improved from the previous assessment period and was good overall."

He added: "Most of the improvements noted during this assessment period were due to successful implementation of the Fermi Operational Excellence Plan and the effectiveness of the line organization in responding to performance deficiencies identified in self-assessments. Fermi staff also improved in their overall ability to identify problems. This was a major

concern during the previous SALP period."

Mr. Beach continued: "Excellent performance was evident in the radiation protection, chemistry, and emergency preparedness program areas. Security weaknesses and personnel errors identified early during the period were addressed by a performance improvement plan, which stabilized and improved security operations."

But he also told the utility: "We note that performance during the early portion of the SALP period was more problematic. Some issues required extensive and repeated efforts to resolve due to incorrect root cause determinations, ineffective corrective actions, or narrowly focused approaches to resolution. However, the SALP process emphasizes the performance during the latter part of the period, and, as already indicated, this was much improved through self-assessment and effective corrective action."

Here is an overall comparison between the new SALP report and the previous one:

<u>Functional Area</u>	<u>Current Period</u>	<u>Previous Period</u>
Operations	2	3
Maintenance	2	2
Engineering	2	2
Plant Support	1	1

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Note: SALP reports are available for review on the NRC's internet web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>.