

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, DC 20555  
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234  
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

**COMMISSION AUTHORIZES RESTART OF MILLSTONE UNIT 3 WHEN PERMITTED  
BY NRC STAFF**

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The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has given its permission for the restart of the Millstone Unit 3 nuclear power plant at Waterford, Conn., once the NRC staff agrees that appropriate pre-operational steps have been taken.

The Commission's action does not mean that resumption of operations is imminent. But it transfers from the NRC Commissioners to the staff Executive Director for Operations the responsibility for verifying that all remaining restart related actions have been completed and for authorizing Unit 3's restart.

In taking this step, the Commission has concurred with a recommendation from the staff presented during an eight-hour briefing on June 2. The staff concluded that Northeast Utilities has made improvements and set up adequate programs to safely operate the plant, which has been shut down for more than two years. The NRC staff also reported that plant activities now conform to the licensed design, that an adequate corrective actions program has been set up, and that the utility has demonstrated its ability to begin power operations.

In a memorandum to the staff which responded to the recommendations at the latest Millstone briefing, the Commission stated that third party oversight by Little Harbor consultants would continue until the Commission concludes it is no longer required. In a similar action last month, the Commission agreed that Northeast Utilities had made appropriate progress in an employee concerns program and a safety conscious work environment, management of backlog items, and oversight and quality assurance to support restart of Unit 3.

Some open technical matters, including some testing and one license amendment, remain to be resolved before Millstone Unit 3 can proceed to restart. In addition, the NRC staff has confirmed Northeast Utilities' commitment to resume operations in a gradual, deliberate manner, pausing at designated "hold points" for evaluation during power escalation. NRC also plans around-the-clock monitoring by inspectors on site in the plant control room during key aspects of the entire restart process.

The transfer of restart authorization for Millstone Unit 3 from the Commission to the staff removes it from "Category 3" and redesignates it as a "Category 2" facility on the NRC Watch List. Category 3 is reserved for plants which must have formal Commission concurrence to resume operations. Category 2 plants are authorized to operate but are closely monitored by the NRC. Millstone Units 1 and 2 remain "Category 3" plants.

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EDITORS: Copies of the Commission's staff requirements memorandum concerning restart operations will be posted on the NRC internet web page at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/reports>.