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**NRC RATES DIABLO CANYON "SUPERIOR" IN TWO AREAS "GOOD" IN TWO
OTHERS IN LATEST REPORT**

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

The SALP report was issued on June 15 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 August 18, 1996, to May 9 of this year.

NRC and PG&E officials will discuss the report at a meeting at 10 a.m. Wednesday, July 8, 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 safety performance at 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. Current and previous SALP scores for Diablo Canyon are as follows:

Functional Areas and Ratings

Plant Operations	<u>Current</u> 2	<u>Previous</u> 2
Maintenance	<u>Current</u> 1	<u>Previous</u> 2
Engineering	<u>Current</u> 2	<u>Previous</u> 2
Plant Support	<u>Current</u> 1	<u>Previous</u> 1

In a letter to PG&E, Ellis W. Merschhoff, Regional Administrator of NRC Region IV in Arlington, Texas, said, "Performance in the plant support area was again determined to be superior. Improvements were observed in the component areas of radiological controls, emergency preparedness, security, fire protection, and housekeeping."

"Performance in the Maintenance area achieved the superior level with improvements in the management of maintenance backlogs and the reduction of plant events due to balance of plant problems," Mr. Merschhoff said.

Improvement was noted in operations, but the performance rating remained good. "Operations management demonstrated effective oversight and conservative decision making," Mr. Merschhoff said.

Good performance in engineering was noted with improvement in several areas. "The large engineering backlog noted in the previous assessment period was effectively reviewed, prioritized, and issues worked so that only a small number of quality-related items remained," Mr. Merschhoff said.

Mr. Merschhoff concluded that, "Overall, the SALP Board observed strong Nuclear Quality Services audits and improvements in self-assessments by all program functions. Continued performance improvements will be dependent on management's use of these audits and assessments."

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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>.