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Region III Office of Public Affairs
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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT PALISADES 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 Palisades Nuclear Power Station, located near South Haven, Michigan.

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

In a letter to Consumers Energy Company, which operates the plant, Geoffrey Grant, Division Director in the NRC's Region III Office, said, "Overall, performance at Palisades was acceptable. The plant continued to be operated in a deliberate and conservative manner even though the plant staff was frequently challenged by equipment problems."

Grant continued, "Areas requiring improvement include the focusing of maintenance and engineering efforts to improve the material condition of the plant to minimize the challenges to the control room operators, and the continuation of efforts to improve operator performance."

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 sites 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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