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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC STAFF ISSUES LATEST PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LIMERICK

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff, in its latest assessment of performance at the Limerick nuclear power plant, has found that safety performance remains acceptable at the Limerick, Pa., facility. The two-unit site is operated by PECO Nuclear Corp.

In a letter to PECO outlining the results of the review, Curtis J. Cowgill, chief of the NRC Region I Division of Reactor Projects branch responsible for inspecting Limerick, wrote that both units were operated safely with no automatic shutdowns or significant unplanned reactor power changes. "Station management," he said, "continued to focus on safety and demonstrated strong oversight of station operations."

The overall condition of plant equipment was very good, which contributed to reliable plant operation, Cowgill said. He also noted improvement in the area of operability determinations as a result of effective changes initiated by management.

The NRC plans to carry out the normal inspection program in the areas of operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support during the next evaluation period. In addition, a special security inspection, called an operational safeguards response evaluation, is planned. This inspection is part of a national program to assess security at all commercial reactor sites.

The Plant Performance Review (PPR) letter is available from the NRC Region I 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.

PPRs are an interim measure the 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 oversight and 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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