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SPECIAL NRC TEAM TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE
AT CLINTON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has established a special evaluation team that will assess the performance of Illinois Power Company at the Clinton nuclear power plant located near Clinton, Illinois.

The NRC team will monitor the Illinois Power Company's evaluation of its performance by a team of outside consultants as well as conduct an independent assessment of the utility's performance.

The 10-member NRC team is headed by Kenneth E. Perkins, Jr., director of the agency's field office in Walnut Creek, California. The team members have not had recent regulatory responsibilities for the Clinton plant.

Areas to be examined are operations and training, maintenance and testing, engineering design and technical support, plant support and radiation protection, and management and organization.

Findings of the NRC team will provide a basis for further NRC actions, including the next semiannual review of nuclear power plant performance by NRC managers in January.

The NRC team will observe the work of the utility assessment at the Clinton site September 24-October 3. Its independent onsite follow-up is scheduled for October 20-31. The team will discuss its findings in a meeting which will be open to the public, tentatively scheduled for early December. Written reports of both the utility and NRC reviews will be available to the public.

In January of this year, Illinois Power received a letter from the NRC Executive Director for Operations (the chief NRC staff executive) notifying it that the agency staff had identified a declining performance trend at the Clinton plant. The NRC staff retained this designation for Clinton in the June

review of nuclear plant performance.

NRC attributed this declining trend to inadequacies in adherence to procedures and to weaknesses in engineering, operations and the corrective action program. Between June and August, the agency fined Illinois Power a total of \$560,000 for performance problems.

More recently, an NRC augmented inspection concluded that safety-related electrical circuit breakers at the plant had malfunctioned because of inadequate lubrication and preventive maintenance. Clinton has been shut down since September of last year.

Because of the declining performance trend, NRC senior staff managers recommended to the Commission in June that either an NRC diagnostic evaluation be performed at Clinton or that a similar examination be done by the utility with NRC oversight. As a result of these concerns, Illinois Power decided on the independent safety assessment process using a team of outside consultants.

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