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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC STAFF RATES PILGRIM "GOOD" IN OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND
PLANT SUPPORT AND "EXCELLENT" IN ENGINEERING

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has rated Boston Edison Company's (BECO) Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Pilgrim, Massachusetts, "good" in operations, maintenance and plant support, and "excellent" in engineering, in its latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) report.

SALP reports assess licensee performance in four functional areas - plant operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support - and assign ratings of Category 1 (superior performance), Category 2 (good performance) and Category 3 (adequate performance). The Pilgrim SALP evaluated performance for the period October 10, 1994, through April 6, of this year.

The NRC staff will meet with BECO officials at 1 p.m. on June 4 in the BECO Support Building at the Pilgrim site to discuss the SALP report. The meeting will be open to the public for observation only.

In a letter to BECO officials, NRC Region I Administrator Thomas T. Martin said in regard to overall plant performance:

"Although the NRC noted a continuing strong management safety perspective, overall performance at the Pilgrim Station declined from the previous SALP period. This resulted in lower SALP scores in the Operations and Plant Support areas.

Mr. Martin had these comments concerning individual SALP rating categories:

OPERATIONS

"While operations management demonstrated a proper safety focus and operators responded effectively to plant transients and off-normal conditions, a decline in operations performance was reflected by operator errors made during RF010 [refueling outage number 10] and later in the period. Also, some training deficiencies became evident during this assessment period. One commonality between the RF010 operator errors and the initial operator license candidate performance results was a weakness in the use of procedures and self-verification techniques.

"Further the organization, in particular, operators and

support personnel, including some managers were not always aggressive in ensuring identified hardware deficiencies were promptly evaluated and resolved. The operator errors experienced during this assessment period and occasional lapses in problem identification and resolution detracted from the otherwise strong safety focus and effective response to off-normal and transient conditions."

MAINTENANCE

Management oversight of the maintenance and surveillance program was generally effective, in that, several weaknesses from the previous SALP period were effectively resolved and strong performance in other areas continued. The reduction of the corrective maintenance backlog resulted from positive management involvement.

"However, instances of weakness in the areas of work planning, work control, supervisory oversight, and worker self-checking occurred that resulted in maintenance performance problems. The work control system that was implemented this period was not yet fully effective, particularly with regard to work planning. Late in the period, the maintenance and I&C managers began to better trend and evaluate human performance issues. Component failures continued to challenge operators, although at a reduced frequency when compared to the previous SALP period."

ENGINEERING

"Overall performance in the engineering area continued to be superior. Management oversight and involvement were important in achieving that level of performance. The quality of engineering work products was very good. Self-assessment activities in the engineering area provided for improved organizational performance and engineering personnel displayed excellent skills. However, some generally isolated instances of weak performance occurred during the period.

"Those weaknesses involved an increase in the backlog of certain administrative activities, problems in licensee review of vendor-provided analyses and root cause assessments, and weak initial response to some conditions adverse to quality."

PLANT SUPPORT

"Performance in the emergency preparedness, effluent, and environmental programs remained strong. In the radiological protection area, although technician performance remained very good and improvements were achieved in recovery of contaminated plant areas, problems with material controls and with ALARA implementation were noted. Further, problems with maintenance support for security equipment presented challenges to the security staff. Fire protection performance remained good. Plant housekeeping improved, with some continuing problems in certain plant areas."

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