



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa.

www.nrc.gov

No. I-07-019

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April 17, 2007

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 ASSESSMENT FOR NINE MILE POINT NUCLEAR PLANT AT PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 24

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual assessment of safety performance at the Nine Mile Point nuclear power plant, in Scriba (Oswego County), N.Y., will be the subject of a public meeting on Tuesday, April 24.

NRC staff will meet with representatives of plant owner Constellation Energy, LLC, at 2 p.m. to discuss the assessment, which covers the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2006, and was documented in a March 2nd letter to the company. The session will take place at the plant's Joint News Center, located at the Oswego County Airport, on County Route 176 in Fulton, N.Y.

Before the meeting is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the performance of the two-reactor Nine Mile Point plant, as well as the role of the NRC in providing oversight of plant safety.

"Each year we take a step back to size up plant performance during the previous calendar year, with the overarching goal of ensuring that facilities are achieving the levels of safety that are essential to protecting the public and the environment," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins, who noted the agency also conducts mid-year assessments of performance. "At the meeting on April 24th, members of the public will receive information about how we go about that review process for Nine Mile Point and other nuclear power plants across the nation. The NRC staff will also be prepared to answer questions from attendees."

The annual assessment letter for Nine Mile Point is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/nmp_2006q4.pdf. The notice for the meeting, with agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML071010098. The meeting slides can be found under accession number ML071010084. ADAMS is accessible at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV.

Overall, the Nine Mile Point plant operated safely during 2006. The NRC utilizes color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. At the conclusion of 2006, all of the performance indicators for Nine Mile Point Units 1 and 2 were determined to be “green” and there were no inspection findings greater than “green.”

Subsequent to the NRC’s 2006 annual assessment, a “white” (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding for Nine Mile Point 1 was finalized by the NRC on March 13, 2007. That finding involves control room operator training. Specifically, operator crews were allowed to validate simulator exam scenarios that were substantially the same as those later administered to crews as part of their annual operating test. This had the unintentional effect of compromising the Unit 1 2005 and 2006 dynamic simulator exam scenarios for these operators. As a result of this finding, the NRC will conduct a supplemental inspection at the plant in 2007 to assess the effectiveness of the company’s corrective actions.

Nine Mile Point 2 will receive a baseline, or routine, level of inspections in 2007.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of plant performance to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, emergency preparedness and problem identification and resolution.

Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 1 is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP1/nmp1_chart.html .

Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 2 is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP2/nmp2_chart.html .

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