



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. III-07-019

May 4, 2007

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR BYRON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Co. on Tuesday, May 8, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Byron Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located at near Byron, Ill.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at Training Center of the Byron plant, Room 107, 4448 N. German Church Road, near Byron. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Byron plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/byro_2006q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Byron plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Byron Unit 1 during 2006 were determined to be "green." The Unit 2 inspection findings were determined to be "green," but the performance indicator for one plant system – the auxiliary feedwater system – was "white" beginning in the second quarter of 2006 and continuing for the remainder of the year. The performance indicator was "white" because a pump failed to operate properly during testing on two occasions in 2005 and was found to be inoperable during a routine check in January 2006.

An NRC inspection in February 2007 determined that the utility had adequately identified the causes of the failures and taken appropriate corrective actions.

As a result of performance of the two units, the NRC will conduct the normal, baseline level of inspections during the upcoming year.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness, equipment inspection activities, and fire protection.

Current performance information for Byron is available on the NRC's web site at: (Unit 1) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BYRO1/byro1_chart.html and (Unit 2) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BYRO2/byro2_chart.html.

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