



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING ON JUNE 8th IN SEABROOK, N.H., TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF SEABROOK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, June 8, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Seabrook nuclear power plant during 2010.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at the Galley Hatch Conference Center, located at the Best Western Inn at Hampton, 815 Lafayette Road, Hampton, N.H. Prior to the meeting's conclusion, there will be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of the NRC staff regarding the plant's performance, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

Seabrook is owned and operated by NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC. It is located in Seabrook, N.H.

"Our Annual Assessment reviews allow us to step back and gauge whether the nuclear power plants we regulate are on the right track in terms of performance and adhering to the highest levels of safety," NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. "Once we've completed these evaluations, we reach out to the public to share that information and to receive their feedback at a location near each plant. We welcome and value these exchanges."

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with "green", representing very low safety significance, and increase to "white", "yellow" or "red", commensurate with the significance of the issues involved.

Overall, the Seabrook reactor operated safely during 2010. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed through the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, there were no inspection findings that were "Greater than Green" (rising to the level requiring additional NRC oversight) or any performance indicators that were other than "Green" (exceeding the threshold for the indicator and requiring additional NRC oversight) for the units. Therefore, for the remainder of 2011, Seabrook will continue to receive the very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well.

During the first and second quarter of 2010, Seabrook was under increased NRC oversight due to a “White” (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding identified in 2009 involving the inadequate design and improper installation of an emergency diesel generator cooling-water flange modification. This caused the generator to fail to operate during a test conducted in February 2009, a problem that was immediately corrected. In June 2010, the NRC conducted a supplemental team inspection at the plant to determine whether NextEra fully understood the root cause of the performance issues, had identified other safety systems that might be similarly affected and had implemented sufficient corrective actions to prevent a recurrence. Based on the results of that review, the NRC was satisfied with the actions taken by the company and the finding was closed out as of the end of the second quarter of 2010, returning Seabrook to the Licensee Response (normal oversight) column of the NRC’s Action Matrix: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html.

Routine inspections are carried out by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to each plant and by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. In 2010, the NRC devoted about 6,700 hours to inspection and related activity of Seabrook, including three major team inspections. Among the areas at Seabrook being inspected this year are radiological safety, fire protection and emergency preparedness.

The agency issues its review of performance at specific plants twice a year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s website, www.nrc.gov, each quarter. Following the release of the annual performance reviews every March, the public is provided with an opportunity to discuss the results. The meetings, which are held in the vicinity of the plant, are in keeping with the NRC’s commitment to transparency and openness with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment letter for Seabrook is available on the NRC website at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/seab_2010q4.pdf. The notice for the public meeting is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML111430625. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC’s Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resources@nrc.gov.

Current performance information for Seabrook is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SEAB1/seab1_chart.html.

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