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Contact: Diane Screnci, 610-337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610-337-5331

NRC Sets Open House for March 18 to Discuss Performance Of Nine Mile Point, Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plants

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will conduct an open house on Tuesday, March 18, to discuss the agency's annual review of safety performance at both the Nine Mile Point and James A. FitzPatrick nuclear power plants.

During the open house, scheduled for 4 to 6 p.m. at Oswego Town Hall, at 2320 County Route 7 in Oswego, N.Y., members of the public will be able to hold one-on-one discussions with NRC staff regarding the plants' performance in 2013, as well as the agency's oversight plans for the facilities this year. NRC staff in attendance will include the Resident Inspectors assigned to the plants on a full-time basis and their supervisors.

Under the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators are used to assess plant performance. (Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance which, if exceeded, trigger additional NRC oversight.) The colors range from green, connoting very low safety or security significance, to white, yellow or red, for an issue of high significance.

Overall, Nine Mile Point and FitzPatrick operated safely in 2013. Nine Mile Point consists of two boiling water reactors located in Scriba and owned by Constellation Energy Nuclear Group LLC, while FitzPatrick is a single boiling-water reactor also located in Scriba and owned by Entergy Nuclear Northeast.

With respect to Nine Mile Point 2, there were no inspection findings that were greater than green and no performance indicators that were other than green as of the end of 2013. As a result, the unit will continue to undergo the normal level of NRC oversight for the remainder of 2014, barring any changes.

Nine Mile Point 1 was under additional NRC oversight throughout 2013 due to a white performance indicator for Unplanned Scrams (shutdowns) per 7,000 Critical Hours. However, that indicator returned to green as of the fourth quarter of last year after the NRC performed a supplemental inspection in December to review the company's root-cause evaluation of the problems behind the shutdowns and any corrective actions. Based on the results of the inspection, the inspectors concluded

that Constellation had adequately performed a root cause analysis of each event and completed and/or planned corrective actions were reasonable to address the related issues. Therefore, the Nine Mile Point 1 will receive the normal level of oversight for the rest of 2014 unless there is a change in performance.

In the case of FitzPatrick, the plant's performance indicator for Unplanned Power Changes per 7,000 Critical Hours crossed the green/white threshold in the fourth quarter of 2012. If a plant has more than six unplanned power changes during the previous 7,000 hours of operation, the indicator will move from green to white. That change for FitzPatrick means the facility will continue to receive additional NRC oversight until the indicator is closed out. The NRC performed a supplemental inspection at the plant in January 2014 in response to the white indicator, but that review has not yet been completed. Given that the performance indicator reflects continuing issues with leaking tubes in the plant's main condenser, this indicator will remain white until repairs are performed during an upcoming refueling and maintenance outage at the facility.

The normal level of oversight consists of a detailed regime entailing thousands of hours of inspection. In 2013, the NRC devoted approximately 7,400 hours of inspection at Nine Mile Point and approximately 5,000 hours of inspection at FitzPatrick.

“We take very seriously the task of stepping back on a regular basis to size up plant performance. These comprehensive evaluations help guide our reviews for the year ahead, though we maintain flexibility should conditions change,” NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. “As it stands now, we intend to continue to apply additional scrutiny to the FitzPatrick plant while the Nine Mile Point units will receive the normal – yet still substantial – level of oversight.”

The NRC issues reports on performance at each plant twice a year: during the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on a quarterly basis on the agency's [website](#). Following the release of the Annual Assessment letters each March, the NRC meets with the public in vicinity of each plant to discuss the results.

Routine inspections are carried out by the three Resident Inspectors assigned to Nine Mile Point and the two Resident Inspectors based at FitzPatrick. Reviews are also performed at the sites by specialist inspectors assigned to the agency's Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas to be inspected this year at Nine Mile Point are the radiological safety program, the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel and the control room operator requalification program, while focus areas at FitzPatrick will include the problem identification and resolution program, emergency preparedness and fire protection.

The Annual Assessment letters for [Nine Mile Point](#) and [FitzPatrick](#), as well as the [meeting notice](#) for the March 18th open house, are available on the NRC website. Current performance information is also available for [Nine Mile Point 1](#), [Nine Mile Point 2](#) and [FitzPatrick](#).