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CONTACT: Roger Hannah 404-997-4417
Joey Ledford 404-997-4416

NRC Schedules Conference with Duke Energy to Discuss Apparent Violation at Oconee Nuclear Station

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a regulatory conference with officials of Duke Energy for July 31 to discuss an apparent violation of NRC requirements involving a crack in a weld on the Unit 1 high pressure injection system at the Oconee Nuclear Station.

The Oconee plant is operated by Duke Energy near Seneca, S.C., about 30 miles west of Greenville.

NRC and Duke Energy officials will discuss the safety significance of the apparent violation related to an undetected crack in a weld that led to reactor coolant system pressure boundary leakage and a forced shutdown of Unit 1. The weld was located in the high pressure injection system. That system would provide water to help cool the reactor core during an accident if pressure in the system remained high.

There was no immediate safety concern because the crack was repaired, but the NRC determined that the method used by the plant to check for cracks did not provide acceptable coverage as required and did not identify the crack before it began leaking.

The regulatory conference is scheduled for 9 a.m. in the NRC's Region II office, located at 245 Peachtree Center Ave., NE, Suite 800 in Atlanta. The meeting is open to the public and NRC officials will be available to answer questions after the meeting.

The apparent violation has preliminarily been classified as "greater than green." The NRC evaluates regulatory performance at commercial nuclear power plants with a color-coded system which classifies findings as green, white, yellow or red, in increasing order of safety significance.

No decisions on the final safety significance or any additional NRC actions will be made at the regulatory conference. Those decisions will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

A [letter](#) from the NRC to Oconee plant management in late June provides additional information on the issue and the apparent violation.