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NRC Lifts Probation for Georgia's Agreement State Regulatory Program; Heightened Oversight to Continue

The NRC is taking Georgia's Agreement State program off probation, after a review earlier this year found the state has made significant progress in addressing several areas of unsatisfactory performance found in an earlier review. The NRC placed Georgia's program on probation in August 2013, the first time the agency has taken such action. The program will remain under "heightened oversight," which involves frequent interaction with NRC staff, including bimonthly conference calls and periodic status reports.

Georgia is one of 37 states that have entered into agreements with the NRC giving them authority to license and regulate certain nuclear materials users within their borders. The agency reviews the Agreement State programs regularly. Oversight of nuclear reactors remains under NRC authority.

The managers of Georgia's program have been addressing performance concerns and recommendations identified in an October 2012 review, and implementing a [program improvement plan](#) approved by NRC staff. The NRC has remained closely involved with the state program managers throughout this process. The problems identified in 2012 related largely to prioritization of work, responding to incidents promptly and prioritizing inspections of licensees using radioactive materials with the greatest potential for harm. These weaknesses did not immediately threaten public health and safety. Probation is an option for ensuring continued protection of public health and safety in cases where program weaknesses exist.

A review team comprised of technical staff from the NRC and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts re-evaluated the Georgia program in January 2014. They found the state has made significant progress in addressing all previous recommendations, has improved communications between management and staff, and is committed to continued improvements. Based on these findings, the team recommended moving the Georgia program from probation to heightened oversight. A management review board of senior NRC managers agreed and proposed the change to the Commission, which made the final decision.

A report on the review can be found [here](#).