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NRC Issues Mid-Cycle Assessments for Nation's Nuclear Plants

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued mid-cycle assessment letters to the nation's 100 operating commercial nuclear power plants regarding their performance through the first half of 2014. The mid-cycle assessment period concluded June 30, with 90 plants in the two highest performance categories.

“These assessment letters are the result of a systematic NRC review of performance indicators and inspection findings at each domestic power reactor facility,” said Scott Morris, director of the Division of Inspection and Regional Support in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. “In addition to ensuring that the nation's nuclear power plants are safe by inspecting them and rating their performance regularly, our goal in issuing these letters is to ensure all our stakeholders clearly understand the basis for our assessments of plant performance and the actions we are taking to address any identified performance deficiencies.”

Of the 90 highest-performing reactors, 78 fully met all safety and security performance objectives and were inspected by the NRC using the normal “baseline” inspection program. Twelve reactors needed to resolve one or two items of low safety significance. For this performance level, regulatory oversight includes additional inspection and follow-up of corrective actions. Plants in this level are: Browns Ferry 3 (Ala.); Clinton (Ill.); Fermi 2 (Mich.); Fitzpatrick (N.Y.); Ginna (N.Y.); Grand Gulf (Miss.); LaSalle 2 (Ill.); Oconee 1 (S.C.); Point Beach 2 (Wisc.); Prairie Island 2 (Minn.); Waterford (La.); and Wolf Creek (Kan.). (Grand Gulf and LaSalle 2 have resolved their issues since the reporting period ended and have transitioned to the highest performing level.)

Eight nuclear reactors were in the third performance category with a degraded level of performance. For this category, regulatory oversight includes more NRC inspections, senior management attention and oversight focused on the cause(s) of the degraded performance. These plants were Arkansas Nuclear One 1 and 2 (Ark.); Browns Ferry 2 (Ala.); Duane Arnold (Iowa); Monticello (Minn.); Pilgrim (Mass.); Point Beach 1 (Wisc.); and Susquehanna 2 (Pa.). (Browns Ferry 2 has resolved some of its issues since the reporting period ended and has transitioned to the second highest performing level. Duane Arnold has resolved its issues since the reporting period ended and has transitioned to the highest performance level.)

One reactor, Browns Ferry 1 in Alabama, was in the fourth performance category through the end of the mid-cycle assessment period and required increased oversight because of a safety finding of high significance. However, since then, Browns Ferry 1 has transitioned to the second highest performing level after resolving its significant performance issues.

The Fort Calhoun plant in Nebraska is currently under a special NRC oversight program distinct from the normal performance levels because of an extended shutdown associated with significant performance issues. In December 2013, the NRC oversight panel cleared the unit to resume operations, but the plant will remain under special oversight until the panel returns it to regular oversight. Therefore, the plant will not receive a mid-cycle assessment letter. Further details on NRC's oversight activities at Fort Calhoun are available on the NRC's webpage on [Special NRC Oversight at Fort Calhoun Station](#).

The NRC routinely updates information on each plant's current performance and posts the latest information as it becomes available to the [action matrix summary](#). The annual assessment letters sent to each operating reactor are also available through the NRC's webpage on the [Reactor Oversight Process](#). Annual construction oversight assessments for new reactors at the [Vogtle and Summer sites](#) and at [Watts Bar 2](#) are also on the NRC website.

Every six months each plant receives either a mid-cycle or annual assessment letter along with an NRC inspection plan.