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NRC to Conduct Open House on March 25th in Salem, N.J., to Discuss 2014 Performance of Salem and Hope Creek Nuclear Plants

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public open house March 25 in Salem, N.J., to discuss the agency's annual review of safety performance at the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants.

The open house is scheduled for 5-7 p.m. at the PSEG Energy & Environmental Resource Center, located at 244 Chestnut St. NRC staff members responsible for inspections of the plants, including the Resident Inspectors based at the Hancocks Bridge (Salem County), N.J., site on a full-time basis, will be available to discuss the facilities' performance in 2014 and the agency's oversight plans for 2015.

Under the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, the agency gauges plant performance through the use of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators, which are statistical measurements of plant performance that can trigger additional oversight if exceeded.

The twin-reactor Salem and single-reactor Hope Creek plants are owned and operated by PSEG Nuclear LLC. On an overall basis, the plants operated safely in 2014. As of the end of last year, both Salem Unit 2 and Hope Creek had no inspection findings or performance indicators that were greater than "green" (very low safety significance). Therefore, those units are currently under the NRC's normal level of oversight.

Salem Unit 1, however, late last year moved into the category of plants undergoing additional NRC scrutiny after receiving a "white" (low to moderate safety significance) performance indicator for the number of unplanned scrams, or shutdowns, per 7,000 hours of operation. An unplanned shutdown occurred at the plant on Oct. 19, 2014. This shutdown, in addition to three earlier ones, caused the performance indicator to transition from "green" to "white." In response, the NRC will perform a supplemental inspection at Salem Unit 1 to assess the company's root cause evaluation of the underlying issues and any and all corrective actions. This will take place once PSEG notifies the agency of its readiness for the inspection.

The NRC's normal level of oversight at each U.S. nuclear power plant involves thousands of hours of inspection. In 2014, the agency devoted approximately 7,000 hours of review at Salem and approximately 4,400 hours at Hope Creek.

“Our process calls for stepped-up scrutiny at Salem Unit 1 due to one of its performance indicators crossing the green/white threshold. We will ensure that the company has appropriately evaluated the underlying issues and put in place corrective actions to prevent a recurrence,” NRC Region I Administrator Dan Dorman said. “More broadly, our annual assessments serve to help us focus our inspection resources on those areas where attention is most needed.”

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 the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results.

Normal inspections are performed by two Resident Inspectors assigned to Salem and two Resident Inspectors assigned to Hope Creek. Reviews are also carried out 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 Salem are emergency planning, radiation protection, corrective actions and the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, while at Hope Creek they will include radiological controls and component design basis.

The annual assessment letters for [Salem](#) and [Hope Creek](#), as well as the [meeting notice](#) for the March 25th open house, are available on the NRC website. Current performance information is also available for [Salem 1](#), [Salem 2](#) and [Hope Creek](#).