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NRC Schedules Open House to Discuss 2015 Performance at Watts Bar Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled an open house for Tuesday, May 3, to discuss the agency's 2015 assessment of both units at the Watts Bar nuclear plant site.

The plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, is located near Spring City, Tenn., about 60 miles southwest of Knoxville. Watts Bar Unit 1 has been in operation since 1996. The NRC issued an operating license for Unit 2 in October 2015 and it is expected to go into commercial operation soon.

The open house, which will include informational posters, is scheduled from 5-7 p.m. at the Comfort Inn, 2811 Decatur Pike in Athens, Tenn.

The NRC has resident inspectors at each unit and those inspectors as well as other staff members will be available to answer questions on the safety performance and regulatory oversight of both Watts Bar units, as well as highlights of NRC inspections.

“We invite the public to visit with us and find out what we’re doing to ensure Watts Bar Unit 1 is being operated safely and Unit 2 meets all NRC testing and startup requirements,” said NRC Region II Administrator Cathy Haney. “These annual meetings offer an opportunity for everyone, and especially people who live near the plant, to learn about our inspection and oversight programs.”

An NRC [letter](#) sent to plant officials addresses the performance of Unit 1 during 2015 and another [letter](#) discussed the NRC assessment of Unit 2.

The NRC review of Watts Bar Unit 1 for 2015 concluded that it operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety and protected the environment. Because of that performance, the plant will continue to receive the detailed routine or baseline inspections this year that all nuclear power plants receive.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start with green, which has very low safety significance, and then progress to white, yellow or red, based on the significance of the issues. All inspection findings and performance indicators for Watts Bar Unit 1 were green in 2015.

The NRC found that Watts Bar Unit 2 construction and testing activities met all NRC regulations during 2015, and the NRC inspection staff continues to monitor and evaluate performance during startup.

In late March, the NRC issued a chilling effect letter to TVA after an NRC review found that some employees may not have felt free to raise safety concerns. Although that letter fell outside the 2015 performance period, NRC staff members will be prepared to answer questions about that letter.

Current performance information for Watts Bar [Unit 1](#) is available on the [NRC website](#). That information is updated at least quarterly. [Additional information](#) on the construction of Watts Bar Unit 2 is also available on the website.