

No: II-17-028

May 1, 2017

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NRC Schedules Public Meeting to Discuss Safety Performance of Westinghouse Fuel Facility

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a public meeting with the management of Westinghouse in Columbia, S.C., on May 9, to discuss the results of the agency's performance review of the company's nuclear fuel fabrication plant.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. in the Gervais Street Room of the South Carolina State Museum, located at 301 Gervais St. in Columbia, and will feature presentations by the NRC and the company, focusing on the agency's review. The meeting is between the NRC and Westinghouse and is open to the public. NRC officials will be available to answer questions or provide additional information following the business portion of the meeting.

The NRC staff assessed performance at the Westinghouse facility during a period beginning Jan. 1, 2015, and ending Dec. 31, 2016, in the categories of safety operations, radiological controls, facility support, and other areas. The NRC also assesses security, but it will not be discussed during the meeting due to the sensitive nature of the information.

The NRC staff identified one area needing improvement in safety operations due to a significant safety issue involving an accumulation of uranium-bearing material in a scrubber system discovered in May 2016. The scrubber system is designed to remove unwanted material from the ventilation system. There were no actual consequences as a result of the accumulation, however, the loss of criticality safety controls in this instance is of significant regulatory concern. The NRC launched a special inspection to review the circumstances of the event and that part of the facility remained shut down until the company addressed the issue.

The NRC review also identified weaknesses in management measures used and assumptions made by the facility in safety evaluations. As a result, the Westinghouse facility will be subject to increased NRC inspections and the next licensee performance review will be completed at the end of 2017 instead of the normal 24-month review for NRC-licensed nuclear fuel facilities.

A copy of the [NRC letter](#) to the company regarding the performance review is publicly available on the [NRC website](#).