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NRC Schedules Meetings to Discuss 2023 Performance of Three TVA Nuclear Power Plants

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold two public meetings this month to discuss the 2023 safety performance of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry, Sequoyah, and Watts Bar nuclear power plants. The NRC is holding one meeting in-person and another virtually to provide more opportunities for the public to attend.

The first meeting is an "open house" on March 20 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Eastern time at the Spring City Municipal Building, 369 Front St. in Spring City, Tennessee. This is an open forum where NRC resident inspectors and other staff will be available to discuss the plants' safety performance and to answer questions from members of the public.

The second meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on March 27 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Eastern time. The telephone conference number for those without access to Teams is 301-576-2978, passcode 621932287#.

The three-unit Browns Ferry plant is in northern Alabama, and the Sequoyah and Watts Bar plants, both of which have two units, are in eastern Tennessee.

The NRC determined that all three plants operated safely during 2023. However, several TVA reactors required additional NRC oversight due to findings of varying safety significance. Browns Ferry Unit 1 was in the second performance category, or the regulatory response column, for most of 2023 due to problems with the high-pressure core cooling system. The reactor returned to a baseline level of NRC oversight in fourth-quarter 2023 following a thorough review of TVA's corrective actions to address the root causes of the problems. Similarly, both Sequoyah units were under increased oversight for security-related issues identified in late 2022. After an NRC supplemental inspection, the units returned to a baseline level of oversight by the end of 2023.

Watts Bar Units 1 and 2 are currently under increased NRC oversight (the second performance category) due to a security-related finding. Additional inspections are planned this year to ensure comprehensive corrective measures are implemented.

The NRC's Reactor Oversight Process uses color-coded inspection findings and indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start at green and increase to white, yellow or red, commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. These inputs determine which of five performance categories corresponds to each unit's performance, with units in the first category receiving the least oversight and those in the fifth category required to shut down to address the safety issues.

The annual assessment letters for the TVA plants, including the upcoming inspection plans, are available on the NRC website.