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NRC Region II Issues Mid-Cycle Plant Performance Review Results

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is making its mid-cycle Plant Performance Reviews (PPRs) for nuclear power plants available on the NRC web site. PPRs are an interim measure the NRC is using to assess nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) in 1998 while it developed a revised reactor oversight process. The text of each letter is available from the NRC Region II Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr.

Full scale PPRs, which consisted of an in-depth, integrated assessment of overall plant performance, were conducted approximately six months ago. The results of those PPRs were communicated to each power reactor licensee and provided performance information similar to that previously contained in SALP reports. The recently conducted mid-cycle PPRs did not entail the same level of assessment effort. The primary purpose of these reviews was to evaluate safety performance information from the past six months and to identify any changes in performance from that described in the last PPRs in order to allocate inspection resources appropriately.

Region II will continue to execute inspection plans consisting of basic and regional initiative inspections based on the level of performance described in the PPRs issued last spring. During the recent evaluation of licensee performance, the staff did not identify any new areas that warranted more inspection at any Region II nuclear plant.

An important element of the previous SALP process was the public meeting the NRC would have with the licensee to discuss the assessment results. During the interim process, the staff has continued its practice of meeting with licensees periodically to discuss its performance assessment. Most plants have had public meetings in the recent past and no meetings at Region II plants are scheduled as a result of the mid-cycle PPRs. Any future meetings will be announced and open to the public.

The revised reactor oversight process is currently undergoing a pilot evaluation at 13 plants at nine sites and is scheduled for full implementation next spring. Under the revised process, the staff will conduct quarterly performance reviews based on a number of performance indicators and inspection findings. A full description of the revised program is available on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm or www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html.

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