

**United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission**  
**Office of Public Affairs, Region I**  
475 Allendale Road King of Prussia, PA 19406  
Fax: 610/337-5241  
Internet: [dps@nrc.gov](mailto:dps@nrc.gov) or [nas@nrc.gov](mailto:nas@nrc.gov)

I-99-56

June 23, 1999

Contact: Diane Screnci (610/337-5330)  
Neil A. Sheehan (610/337-5331)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NRC STAFF SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING FOR JUNE 29 TO DESCRIBE  
AGENCY'S NEW INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR SALEM/HOPE CREEK NUCLEAR PLANTS**

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will describe a significantly new pilot inspection and assessment program for the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants in a public meeting on Tuesday, June 29.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Media Room at the John B. Campbell Community Center, 118 Walnut St., Salem, N.J. It will include a description of the new program and an opportunity for questions and comments from the public.

Earlier on the same day, representatives of the plants' operator, Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) Co., will meet with NRC staff to discuss items of mutual interest, including the new pilot inspection program, human performance initiatives and corrective action program changes. That meeting, which will also be open to the public, will begin at 2 p.m. in Conference Room A in the Site Administration Building at the plants, located in Lower Alloways Creek Township, N.J.

Salem and Hope Creek are two of nine sites taking part in a pilot program which began June 1 to test and adjust the new program. Following a trial of at least six months, the program is expected to be extended next year to all 103 commercial nuclear power reactors.

The NRC developed the new reactor inspection and assessment program to use its resources more effectively and efficiently. The changes also reflect improvements in nuclear power plant safety performance over the past 20 years.

A baseline inspection program will continue for all other nuclear plants, with NRC resident inspectors on-site supplemented by specialists from one of four NRC regional offices. If performance declines at a plant, the NRC will step up its regulatory activities for that plant.

The new assessment program will focus in part on performance indicators -- statistics that show how the plants are performing. In addition, NRC inspectors will monitor a number of plant activities that are not measured by the indicators. The inspections will pay particular attention to how well the plant staff identifies and fixes problems.

The pilot inspection and assessment program began this month at nine power plant sites. In addition to Salem and Hope Creek, they

include: FitzPatrick in New York, Prairie Island in Minnesota, Quad Cities in Illinois, Shearon Harris in North Carolina, Sequoyah in Tennessee and Fort Calhoun and Cooper in Nebraska.

A fuller description of the new inspection and oversight program is available on the NRC's Internet web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>

Questions may also be addressed to: [opa@nrc.gov](mailto:opa@nrc.gov)

#