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NRC STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR PLANT OPERATIONAL SAFEGUARDS PROGRAM

In response to a number of press queries, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission today issued the following statement about the status of its Operational Safeguards Response Evaluations program:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has not diminished its security requirements at commercial nuclear power plants around the country. Published reports asserting the NRC has eliminated the only program for testing the ability of nuclear power plants to repel terrorists are misleading. Such assertions fail to account for continuing NRC inspections and required compliance verification programs conducted by the licensees to assure the continued effectiveness of security measures.

The program in question, the Operational Safeguards Response Evaluations (OSRE), along with a predecessor program, over a period of more than 10 years has tested security arrangements at all of the 100-plus commercial nuclear power plants in the United States. Useful insights on weaknesses were uncovered and addressed as a result of these NRC initiatives.

Nonetheless, the NRC has recently undertaken a review of the appropriate role of performance testing in validating security at commercial nuclear power plants within the overall context of assuring an adequate level of protection. The results of the analysis are currently being assessed, and the agency will make appropriate adjustments to the existing security program, as warranted.

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