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**NRC RATES SURRY NUCLEAR PLANT "SUPERIOR" IN THREE AREAS,
"GOOD" IN ONE AREA OF LATEST ASSESSMENT REPORT**

The Surry nuclear power plant received performance ratings of "superior" in three areas and "good" in the one remaining area of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) of the facility.

The SALP report was sent April 27 to Virginia Power, which operates the facility near Surry, Virginia. It evaluates the plant's performance from September 29, 1996 through March 21 of this year.

NRC and Virginia Power officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 1:00 p.m. Monday, May 11, at the Surry site. The meeting will be open for public observation, and NRC officials will be available after the meeting to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

The NRC SALP process rates licensees in four functional areas — plant operations, maintenance, engineering, and plant support — and assigns ratings of Category 1, 2 or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or adequate.

The report on Surry gives the plant a Category 1 rating in plant operations, maintenance and plant support indicating "superior" performance, and a Category 2 rating in engineering, indicating "good" performance. The ratings in the plant's previous SALP report, issued in November 1996, were Category 1's in plant operations, engineering and plant support and Category 2 in maintenance.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator Luis Reyes said "the plant operated well" as "performance in the plant operations and plant support areas remained superior." He said performance in maintenance improved, most notably during the latter portion of the assessment period. Reyes said the engineering area declined because "some engineering support to maintenance resulted in inadequate work and testing and some long-standing issues were not resolved completely by engineering."

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EDITORS: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office. SALP reports are also available on the NRC's Internet web site (www.nrc.gov/OPA) and by e-mail subscription. To receive SALP reports by e-mail as they are issued, send an e-mail to listproc@nrc.gov with the following message: subscribe salp yourfirstname yourlastname.