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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NRC ISSUES PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff, in its latest review of performance at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant, has found that safety performance at the Lacey Township, N.J., facility remains acceptable. The plant is operated by GPU Nuclear Inc.

In a letter to the company outlining the results of the review, Wayne L. Schmidt, acting chief of the NRC Region I Division of Reactor Projects branch responsible for inspecting Oyster Creek, said the plant's senior management was actively involved, maintained a strong presence and demonstrated safety-conscious decision-making during the evaluation period of April 1998 through Jan. 15, 1999. Schmidt also said the rate of personnel errors remained low and that nuclear safety assessment group provided timely, critical insights on plant performance to management.

Performance in the area of operations continued to improve, and maintenance performance remained effective. In the engineering area, personnel demonstrated "good ownership of assigned issues and provided excellent support" to workers in the operations and maintenance departments. Plant support was effective with one exception: corrective actions for the emergency preparedness program were not always completed in a timely manner.

The NRC staff will conduct normal inspections during the next evaluation period, with a supplemental inspection planned to look at controls over maintenance work conducted while the plant operates.

The text of the plant performance review (PPR) letter is available from the NRC Region I Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

PPRs are being used by the NRC as an interim measure to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) process until a new assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every 12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection findings. This program will be tested at eight sites beginning in June and will be extended to all

plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at:  
<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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