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**NRC STAFF ISSUES ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE
AT SHEARON HARRIS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

**Superior Performance Noted In Plant Operations, Maintenance & Plant Support;
Engineering Moves From Former Superior Rating But Still Described As Good**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report on regulatory performance at Carolina Power & Light Company's Shearon Harris nuclear power plant near Raleigh. It continues a previous assessment of superior performance in Plant Operations, Maintenance and Plant Support but lowers the functional area of Engineering from superior to good.

The report, dated February 24, says plant operations at Harris during the assessment period, from March 17, 1996 through January 17, 1998, were characterized by an excellent focus on safety and conservative operational decisions, reversing a negative trend of operator performance errors that occurred early in the period. Maintenance performance was rated as superior, resulting in good plant material condition and high safety system availability. Performance in the functional area of Plant Support received superior marks for radiological control, chemistry, emergency preparedness and fire protection with security performance described as outstanding.

Engineering performance was rated as good, a decline from its previous superior assessment. The NRC report said engineering support to operations was good, with a focus on safety, but problems were noted near the end of the assessment period in troubleshooting and procedural use and guidance.

Previous performance in these areas, assessed for a period from April 3, 1994 through March 16, 1996, was superior across the board.

The NRC evaluates performance at each commercial nuclear power plant in the United States on a systematic basis about every 18 months. Performance is rated in four functional areas as being in Category 1 (superior), Category 2 (good) or Category 3 (acceptable). Plants with lower performance assessments may be evaluated more often while assessment periods for better performers may be extended.

NRC and CP&L officials will meet March 12 at 3:00 p.m. in the company's corporate offices in Raleigh to discuss details of the report. The meeting will be open to observation by interested observers, and NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from those who attend.

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