



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov Site: www.nrc.gov

Blog: <http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov>

No. 11-042

March 11, 2011

NRC MONITORS NOTICE OF UNUSUAL EVENT AT DIABLO CANYON POWER PLANT, TSUNAMI ISSUES

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, through its regional office in Arlington, Tex., is monitoring a notice of unusual event (NOUE) at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, located near San Luis Obispo, Calif. Senior NRC officials are working at the agency's Rockville, Md., headquarters to coordinate NRC activities with respect to the Japanese earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

"The NRC is closely monitoring this situation as it unfolds with respect to nuclear facilities within the United States. NRC staff is working closely with its resident inspectors who are on site to ensure safe operations," said NRC Chairman Gregory Jaczko.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E), operator of the Diablo Canyon two-reactor plant, declared a precautionary NOUE Unusual Event at 4:23 a.m. EST today after receiving a tsunami warning from the West California Emergency Management Agency. The tsunami warning was generated after an estimated 8.9 magnitude earthquake occurred off the eastern Japanese coast.

The licensee reported the Diablo Canyon plant is stable and both units remain on line. The plant is well protected against tsunami conditions as required by NRC regulations. The NRC has staff at the plant keeping track of the plant's response.

Nuclear power plants are built to withstand environmental hazards, including earthquakes and tsunamis. Even those plants that are located outside of areas with extensive seismic activity are designed for safety in the event of such a natural disaster. The NRC requires that safety-significant structures, systems, and components be designed to take into account the most severe natural phenomena historically reported for the site and surrounding area.

In addition to the Diablo Canyon plant, the NRC is also monitoring the San Onofre nuclear power plant, the Humboldt Bay spent fuel storage site and NRC-regulated nuclear materials sites in Hawaii and Alaska to name a few. Site personnel have informed the NRC they are prepared for possible tsunami effects.

###

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.