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NRC MONITORS PREPARATION FOR HURRICANE GEORGES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has adopted an increased state of readiness and is monitoring preparations for hurricane Georges at two nuclear power plants in Louisiana. The plants are Waterford 3 near Taft and River Bend near St. Francisville.

Although nuclear power plants are designed to withstand high winds and have, in the past, survived direct hits by powerful storms with minimal damage, the NRC and plant operators routinely take precautions against a potential threat to safety such as hurricane Georges.

NRC inspectors are present around the clock at Waterford 3 and River Bend to provide assistance as might be requested by Entergy Operations, Inc., the operator of the two plants. Personnel are also present in the NRC's Incident Response Center at Region IV offices in Arlington, Texas, and at the Louisiana Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge.

Currently, Waterford 3 is shut down owing to mechanical problems unrelated to the storm and will remain shutdown until the storm has passed. River Bend is operating at full power, but should hurricane force winds be predicted for St. Francisville the plant will also be shutdown.

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