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NRC STAFF PLANS PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING
AT GE NUCLEAR FUEL FACILITY IN WILMINGTON, NC

Meeting Is Open to Public Observation

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a meeting with officials of General Electric's Nuclear Energy Production plant in Wilmington, NC at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 28, to discuss the plant's performance. The meeting will be held at the GE site in the Building J auditorium.

NRC officials will discuss with GE a licensee performance review performed by the agency in which performance was evaluated in the areas of safety operations, safeguards, radiological controls, facility support and licensing activities for a period from January 1, 1995 through August 15, 1997. The review is a periodic assessment of fuel facilities licensed by the NRC and is used to form a basis for establishing the NRC's inspection program at the facility for the next year as well as providing the company feedback on how the NRC views its performance.

The NRC review concluded that performance was good in the major areas of safeguards, facility support and licensing activities. In a letter to GE on October 20, NRC Regional Administrator Luis Reyes wrote that the company's strong performance was due, in part, to "identification of areas needing corrective action and the effectiveness of resulting corrective actions." Reyes' letter also highlighted the company's "thorough and timely" communication of events to the NRC. The review did find some areas needing improvement, and challenges were identified in reducing solid radioactive waste and other waste containing low levels of uranium. In addition, the review identified challenges in maintaining the safe operation in the ammonium diuranate processing area and bringing the dry conversion facility into full operation.

Based on the GE review, the NRC has decided to reduce inspections at the Wilmington plant to the minimum number for each area as described in the NRC's inspection manual, except in the area of solid radioactive waste because of limited access to waste disposal sites for licensees in North Carolina.

The meeting is open to interested members of the public and the media for observation, and NRC officials will be available at the conclusion of the meeting to answer any questions.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: An outline of the results of the NRC review is available from this office.