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Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

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E-mail: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 ASSESSMENT FOR MILLSTONE NUCLEAR PLANT AT TWO PUBLIC MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 22

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual assessment of safety performance at the Millstone nuclear power plant, in Waterford, Conn., will be the subject of two public meetings on Thursday, March 22.

At 3 p.m., NRC staff will meet with representatives of plant owner Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc., to discuss the assessment, which covers the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2006, and was documented in a March 2nd letter to the company. The session will take place in the Lelan F. Sillin, Jr., Training Center, located at the plant on Rope Ferry Road.

Then at 6 p.m., NRC staff will present the review results to Connecticut's Nuclear Energy Advisory Council (NEAC) at Waterford Town Hall, 15 Rope Ferry Road in Waterford.

Before both meetings are adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the performance of the Millstone plant, as well as the role of the NRC in providing oversight of plant safety.

"Each year we take a step back to size up plant performance during the previous calendar year, with the overarching goal of ensuring that facilities are achieving the levels of safety that are essential to protecting the public and the environment," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins, who noted the agency also conducts mid-year assessments of performance. "At the meetings on March 22, members of the public will receive information about how we go about that review process for Millstone and other nuclear power plants across the nation. The NRC staff will also be prepared to answer questions from attendees."

The annual assessment letter for Millstone is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/mill_2006q4.pdf. Notices for the meetings, with agendas attached, are available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession numbers ML070670489 and ML070670485. ADAMS is accessible via the agency's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available by contacting the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or

301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV .

Overall, the Millstone plant operated safely during 2006. The NRC utilizes color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Because all of the performance indicators for Millstone Units 2 and 3 were determined to be “green” and there were no inspection findings greater than “green” at the end of 2006, the plant will receive the baseline, or routine, level of inspections in 2007.

The NRC staff did identify five “green,” or of very low safety significance, inspection findings with documented cross-cutting aspects in the area of problem identification and resolution in 2006. The findings were cross-cutting in nature, that is, they were commonalities in several areas of performance associated with operability determinations. However, the NRC staff determined that Dominion appropriately responded to the issues through a range of corrective actions.

Also, a “white” performance indicator for Unit 2 in the area of shutdowns (automatic or manual) with loss of normal heat removal was closed out during the third quarter of 2006 following a root cause evaluation by the company and a supplemental inspection by the NRC.

Routine inspections are performed by three NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant performance to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are Unit 3 containment sump modifications, radiological safety, dry cask storage of spent fuel and emergency preparedness.

Current performance information for Millstone 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/MILL2/mill2_chart.html .

Current performance information for Millstone 3 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/MILL3/mill3_chart.html .

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