



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING ON APRIL 14 IN DELTA, PA., TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF PEACH BOTTOM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct a public meeting on Tuesday, April 14, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Peach Bottom nuclear power plant.

The meeting will begin at 3 p.m. at the Peach Bottom Inn, at 6805 Delta Road in Delta, Pa. Prior to its conclusion, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's performance, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

Peach Bottom, which is the site of two operating boiling-water reactors, is located in Delta (York County). It is owned and operated by Exelon Nuclear.

Overall, Peach Bottom operated safely during 2008. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the NRC Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for the plant that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green." Therefore, for the rest of 2009, Peach Bottom will continue to receive the very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well. In 2008, the NRC devoted approximately 6,720 hours of inspection to the facility, including three major team inspections.

Notwithstanding this performance, there was a "white" (low to moderate safety significance) security-related finding assigned during 2008 involving inattentive security officers. The agency took significant actions to address the issue, including issuance of a Confirmatory Action Letter and additional oversight. These actions were subsequently closed out following multiple NRC inspections that evaluated the scope, status of completion and effectiveness of Exelon's actions in this area at Peach Bottom.

"In 2008, all but one of the 26 commercial power reactors in Region I, which covers the Northeastern United States, fully met our clearly defined performance criteria. Peach Bottom was among those plants achieving those objectives. That means those plants will receive the normal level of NRC oversight this year if they continue to meet the high safety benchmarks set

out for each site,” said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. “That said, our inspectors will remain on the lookout for any problems or adverse trends that might indicate a change in performance. As always, we will not hesitate to act should we identify any safety concerns.”

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year: During the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s web site, www.nrc.gov, each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The meetings are in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment letter for the Peach Bottom plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/pb_2008q4.pdf. The notice for the annual assessment meeting is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML090840440. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC’s Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@NRC.GOV.

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas at Peach Bottom to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are fire protection, radiological safety, problem identification and resolution, emergency planning and the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Current performance information for Peach Bottom Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PB2/pb2_chart.html. Current performance information for Peach Bottom Unit 3 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PB3/pb3_chart.html.

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