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NRC Authorizes Honeywell Metropolis Facility to Resume Operations

After a thorough evaluation and inspection of plant modifications at the Honeywell uranium conversion plant in Metropolis, Ill., the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that the company may resume all NRC-licensed activities.

“We have inspected the changes made by the company and found that the facility has taken the necessary actions to meet NRC requirements,” said NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree. “Honeywell has appropriately enhanced the plant’s ability to withstand earthquakes and tornadoes.”

In October 2012, the NRC issued a confirmatory order to Honeywell describing the steps the company would have to take before it could resume its uranium conversion operations. That order came after inspections earlier in 2012 identified concerns related to the likelihood of a release of uranium hexafluoride following an earthquake or tornado.

The plant has been shut down since May 2012 and the company has been enhancing and modifying equipment to meet the requirements of that order. In June, the NRC allowed the plant to begin limited operations, but today’s decision authorizes operation of all of the plant processes covered by its NRC license.

The Honeywell plant takes milled uranium and converts it into uranium hexafluoride. That compound is then processed at other facilities to make fuel for commercial power reactors.