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NRC STAFF RATES SEABROOK "GOOD" IN OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND ENGINEERING AND "SUPERIOR" IN PLANT SUPPORT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has rated performance at the Seabrook nuclear power plant as "good" in operations, engineering and maintenance and "superior" in plant support, the four areas of review in the NRC's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP). Located in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the plant is operated by North Atlantic Energy Service Corporation.

The NRC issues SALP reports for the nation's commercial nuclear power plants about once every 18 months. Three levels of ratings are used in the reports: Category 1 ("superior"), Category 2 ("good") and Category 3 ("acceptable").

The latest Seabrook SALP covers the period from May 5, 1996 through December 6, 1997.

In a letter to the utility, NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller wrote that while the plant's overall performance was good, "performance declined from the superior levels observed during the previous period." In the previous SALP, operations and engineering had both been rated "superior".

He added, "Senior management was involved in plant activities and focused on problem identification; however some problems were noted with root cause analysis and corrective actions." Equipment availability during the assessment period was good, Mr. Miller said, adding that the staff noted that operators and engineering personnel did not "aggressively pursue resolution of some degraded conditions on equipment important to safety."

The NRC staff will meet with utility officials at 10:00 a.m., on February 4 to discuss the SALP. The meeting, which is open to the public for observation, will be held at the Science and Nature Center at Seabrook Station.

Note: SALP reports are available on the NRC's Internet web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>.

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