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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC ISSUES LATEST PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN POINT 2

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at the Indian Point 2 nuclear power plant, in Buchanan, N.Y. The plant is operated by Consolidated Edison Company of New York.

The review assesses performance at the site from April 1998 through January 1999.

In a letter to Consolidated Edison outlining the results, NRC Region I official, A. Randolph Blough, said, since restarting in September 1998 from a prolonged outage to address a large backlog of equipment problems, and programmatic and performance concerns, "the unit operated at full power with the exception of a five-day shutdown two weeks after restart." He said, "The senior management team [at the site] ensured that the necessary corrective actions were implemented before startup to address performance and programmatic concerns and that long-term corrective action plans were established."

Mr. Blough also said licensed operator performance improved, as did plant material condition. He noted "general improvement in the site problem identification and corrective action system," although "some problems with timeliness and adequacy of issue resolution remained." Reducing the large backlog of outstanding corrective action items, and the backlogs in maintenance and engineering remained a challenge. While overall improvements in engineering were noted, some weaknesses continued in the understanding of the plant's design basis.

In addition to the normal NRC inspection program, NRC plans to conduct three inspections at the initiative of the Regional Office. One is an operational safety team inspection to evaluate progress in improving operational performance. An engineering inspection focusing on the management of engineering backlogs, maintenance rule implementation and corrective action effectiveness is planned. The NRC also will review the operational status of the emergency preparedness program.

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region I Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews, called plant performance reviews (PPRs), give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

Plant performance reviews are an interim measure NRC is utilizing to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of License Performance (SALP) process until a new oversight and

assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every 12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection findings. This program will be tested at eight sites beginning in June and will be extended to all plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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