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NRC TO DISCUSS INDIAN POINT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS, PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM SPECIAL INSPECTION ON MARCH 28

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold two public meetings on Tuesday, March 28, regarding the Indian Point nuclear power plant. An afternoon meeting will cover the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance for Indian Point Units 2 and 3. An evening session will deal with the results of an NRC Special Inspection conducted to assess Entergy's efforts to evaluate Unit 2 spent fuel pool leakage and subsequently discovered contamination of on-site groundwater.

Entergy Nuclear Northeast operates the plant, located in Buchanan, N.Y.

"There will be two opportunities on March 28th for the public to learn about NRC activities at Indian Point," NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. "Those who are unable to attend the afternoon meeting hopefully will be able to attend the evening session and vice versa. We recognize the high level of interest in these issues and will be prepared to answer questions regarding these topics at the respective sessions."

The afternoon meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 2:30 p.m. at Crystal Bay on the Hudson – Charles Point Marina, at 5 John Walsh Blvd. in Peekskill, N.Y. (Directions are available at <http://www.crystal-bay.com/location.html>.) Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

The evening meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m., also at Crystal Bay on the Hudson. It will include details of the NRC Special Inspection. In addition, information will be provided by the company about its investigation and assessment of the leakage and contamination and by the State of New York regarding its independent monitoring of groundwater in and around the site. Following the presentations, representatives of the NRC, Entergy and the state's Department of Environmental Conservation will respond to questions.

A report issued on March 16 summarizes the findings of the Special Inspection and can be found in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML060750842. 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 .

Information and correspondence regarding the Indian Point tritium contamination and tritium contamination in general can be found on the NRC web site at the following locations:

www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/indian-point-issues.html ,
www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/grndwtr-contam-tritium.html .

At the annual assessment meeting in the afternoon, the period of performance to be discussed with representatives of Entergy will be Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2005. Overall, the Indian Point units operated safely during the period. The NRC uses 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.

During 2005, all of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Indian Point 3 were "green," placing it in the Licensee Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix. As such, the unit will receive baseline, or routine, inspections in 2006. Indian Point 2, meanwhile, received a "white" finding in the second quarter of last year involving the degradation of a plant emergency cooling system. A supplemental inspection for the "white" finding was completed in December 2005 with positive results. Indian Point 2 will return to the Licensee Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix in the second quarter of 2006, in the absence of any new findings having a safety significance of greater than "green."

In the agency's 2005 mid-year assessment for Indian Point, the NRC discussed the continuation of a substantive cross-cutting issue in the area of problem identification and resolution (PI&R). A cross-cutting issue is one that affects several different areas of performance. Based on the results of a PI&R team inspection in June 2005, a supplemental inspection in December 2005 and Entergy's progress in addressing longstanding issues which challenged the implementation of its PI&R program, the NRC has determined that closure of the cross-cutting issue is now appropriate.

Above and beyond the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, enhanced oversight remains in effect for Indian Point in response to issues associated with Indian Point 2 spent fuel pool leakage, including groundwater contamination, and work designed to improve the reliability and availability of the plant's Alert and Notification System, including changes to meet backup power requirements detailed in an NRC order issued in January 2006. That oversight is made possible by a deviation from the Reactor Oversight Process approved on Oct. 31, 2005, by the NRC's Executive Director for Operations.

A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the facility during the period and will serve as the basis for the annual assessment meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at:

http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/inp3_2005q4.pdf . The meeting notice, with the meeting agenda attached, is available in ADAMS under accession number ML060660412. The NRC slides will be available at least three days before the meeting and will be provided in a revision to the meeting notice.

Current performance information for Indian Point 2 is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/IP2/ip2_chart.html .

Current performance information for Indian Point 3 is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/IP3/ip3_chart.html .

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