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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE' IN LATEST REVIEW OF SEQUOYAH

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at the Sequoyah nuclear power plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority near Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee.

In a letter to TVA outlining the results of the review, NRC official Paul E. Fredrickson said overall performance at Sequoyah remained acceptable. He said both units "operated at high capacity factors," noted that Unit 2 completed a successful refueling outage, and said "management involvement in operations continued to be effective in resolving emergent issues."

Fredrickson said performance challenges during the evaluation period, which ran from February 1998 through January 1999, were in the areas of licensed operator training and performance; corrective and preventive maintenance on certain electrical breakers; and in the identification, evaluation and resolution of some adverse conditions.

He said that, in addition to the NRC's normal inspection program, two additional Sequoyah inspections will be conducted at the initiative of the Atlanta regional office. One will place emphasis on breaker program maintenance and post maintenance testing following refurbishment. The other will focus on the material condition of the plant's ice condensers. He said some increased emphasis will also be placed on the licensed operator training program and its implementation and on implementation of problem evaluation reports into the plant's corrective action program.

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region II 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 give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

Plant performance reviews are being used as an interim measure 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 assessment program is developed. Sequoyah has been selected as one of eight pilot plants to be used by the NRC in this process. 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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