

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC LIFTS ORDER REQUIRING INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT OF EMPLOYEE CONCERNS PROGRAM AT MILLSTONE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has lifted an order requiring independent, third-party oversight of the employee concerns and safety-conscious work environment programs at the Millstone nuclear power plants in Connecticut.

Based on its oversight and monitoring of these programs, as well as that provided by an independent consultant, Little Harbor Consultants, the NRC staff has determined the conditions that led NRC to issue the order to Northeast Utilities in October 1996 have been corrected. That order directed Northeast Utilities to devise and implement a comprehensive plan for handling safety concerns raised by Millstone employees and for assuring an environment free from retaliation and discrimination.

In May 1998, the Commission agreed with a recommendation made by NRC staff that the employee concerns program and safety conscious work environment at Millstone had improved to a level that would support restart of Millstone 3. The Commission also agreed with the staff's recommendation that Little Harbor Consultants continue its independent oversight role to assure that performance improvements were sustained as Millstone moved into an operational mode. The NRC staff has concluded that Northeast Utilities has sustained an acceptable level of performance in its employee concerns program and in creating a safety-conscious work environment.

A letter sent to Northeast Utilities today advises the company that the requirement for third-party oversight has been terminated. The letter also notes that Northeast Utilities intends to utilize Little Harbor Consultants periodically. The independent consultants will provide assessments on the various employee concerns programs for Northeast Utilities during the next year.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Copies of the letter are available on the NRC's homepage: (<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/reports>) or from the Office of Public Affairs.

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