



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC REASSURES GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

Chairman Richard A. Meserve of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission reassured the governor of California today that the NRC will continue to monitor closely the operations of the two nuclear power plants operated by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) in the state to make sure they continue to be operated with the highest regard for safety, notwithstanding bankruptcy proceedings involving PG&E.

In a letter to Governor Gray Davis, Chairman Meserve asserted that: "Our inspectors are particularly sensitive to signs of curtailment of required activities that may impinge on safety." He noted that "our ongoing regulatory oversight and our inspections to date confirm that the present financial situation has had no impact on PG&E's ability to operate its units safely and in accordance with our requirements."

In addition to the full time resident inspectors regularly assigned to each of the power plants, he added, the agency is prepared to augment their oversight activities with additional inspectors from NRC's regional office in Arlington, Texas, "if circumstances warrant."

Chairman Meserve noted that PG&E has assured the NRC that sufficient funds are available to meet the company's obligation to satisfy NRC health and safety requirements. In bankruptcy proceedings, the NRC will seek to ensure that sufficient funds continue to be protected for that purpose.

Also to be protected in court proceedings will be the decommissioning funds that, by law, have been set aside by PG&E against the day when it decides to shut down its nuclear power plants and remediate any residual radioactivity at their sites.

The Department of Justice will represent the NRC in bankruptcy proceedings involving PG&E.

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