



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011-4005

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Contact: Victor Dricks
Phone: 817-860-8128

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E-Mail: opa4@nrc.gov

NRC AUTHORIZES RESTART OF WATERFORD NUCLEAR PLANT

Following a comprehensive assessment, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has authorized the restart of the Waterford nuclear plant near Taft, La. Workers are performing maintenance unrelated to the hurricane prior to initiating procedures leading to restart of the reactor.

The plant shut down as a precautionary measure on Aug. 28 when a warning for Hurricane Katrina was issued for St. Charles Parish, La., where the plant is located. The plant was essentially undamaged by the storm, although it did lose offsite power and some communications systems were affected.

NRC performed a readiness assessment to verify that the plant, its staff and onsite emergency preparedness are ready to support restart. NRC worked with other Federal agencies in their evaluation of the readiness of offsite emergency preparedness and response capabilities to support operation of the plant. Conditions are sufficiently stable to ensure that the plant's emergency preparedness plans and procedures could be implemented should they be needed.

"The NRC has performed a comprehensive review of the plant's readiness for restart," NRC Chairman Nils Diaz said. "We are confident the plant can be operated safely." Once operational, Waterford will supply electricity to support recovery of the regional infrastructure.

NRC and its licensees took aggressive and appropriate steps to prepare for Hurricane Katrina. NRC coordinated extensively with other Federal, State and local emergency response organizations before, during, and after the Katrina.

From its inception, NRC headquarters and regional operations centers carefully tracked the status of Hurricane Katrina in the Atlantic Ocean and verified licensee preparedness and confirmed communications capability amongst emergency response organizations. NRC coordinated with its regional offices, other Federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and State and local organizations and maintained close communications

with its licensees throughout the passage of the storm. NRC also applied lessons learned from previous hurricanes and updated its communication and coordination protocols for determining offsite emergency preparedness for a natural disaster in advance of Hurricane Katrina.

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