



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov/OPA

No. II-00-54

August 18, 2000

CONTACT: Ken Clark (404)562-4416/e-mail: kmc2@nrc.gov
Roger D. Hannah (404)562-4417/e-mail: rdh1@nrc.gov

NRC TO MEET WITH DUKE ENERGY TO DISCUSS INSPECTION FINDING AT OCONEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a conference with Duke Energy officials in Atlanta on Thursday, September 7, at 1:00 p.m. (EDT) to discuss the risk significance and an apparent violation related to the availability of spent fuel pool water for high pressure injection if accidents were to occur at the three-unit Oconee nuclear power plant near Seneca, South Carolina.

The meeting will be held in the NRC offices located on the 24th floor of the Sam Nunn Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street, SW. It will be open to observation by interested members of the public and news media representatives. NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions.

An NRC inspection completed in June found that in certain potential situations involving a tornado hitting the site, there was not reasonable assurance that the spent fuel pool could be used as a source of water for high pressure injection. Based on the NRC's significance determination process, that lack of assurance is an apparent violation. This finding was preliminarily determined to fall into the "white" category. The safety significance of each NRC inspection finding is characterized by a color -- green, white, yellow, or red. A green finding receives normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments receive increasing NRC involvement. A white inspection finding indicates an issue of low to moderate safety significance.

The conference with Duke Energy is being held at the company's request so company officials can discuss their perspectives on the risk significance of the inspection finding and their position on the apparent violation.

No decision on the final significance, the apparent violation or any contemplated enforcement action will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

##