



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa.

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>

No. I-04-058

Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

December 28, 2004
Email: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS RESULTS OF SPECIAL INSPECTION AT HOPE CREEK PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Public Service Electric and Gas (PSEG) on Jan. 5 to discuss the results of an NRC special inspection conducted at the Hope Creek nuclear power plant. The inspection was performed at the PSEG-operated facility in Hancocks Bridge (Salem County), N.J., in response to a steam line failure and shutdown with complications that occurred there on Oct. 10.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Select Bridgeport, located off Exit 10 of Interstate 295 in Swedesboro, N.J. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will accept questions and comments from the public.

Following the Oct. 10th event, an NRC team of five full-time and four part-time members was tasked with evaluating the circumstances surrounding it. The review included, among other things, an assessment of whether the steam pipe failure could have been prevented and an independent evaluation of equipment and human performance issues that complicated the shutdown of the reactor.

In addition to a discussion of the special inspection results, the Jan. 5th meeting will include a review of the issues associated with the plant's "B" reactor recirculation pump and exhaust piping for the high-pressure coolant injection pump. The NRC staff expects to have completed its assessments of those issues by then. But if those assessments are not finished by the time of the meeting, the agency would either delay the Jan. 5th session or, more likely, conduct a subsequent management meeting with PSEG to further discuss them. That meeting, which also would be open to the public for observation, would take place prior to the return to service of the Hope Creek plant from its current refueling and maintenance outage. The plant has remained shut down since the Oct. 10th event.

"PSEG made a commitment to meet with us and discuss the results of our special inspection and the key technical issues facing the Hope Creek nuclear power plant before it returns to service," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel Collins. "This meeting adheres to that pledge and affords us an opportunity to delve into these issues in a public setting."

Background information regarding the Hope Creek plant can be found on a portion of the NRC's web site devoted to that plant and the adjacent Salem reactors. The web address is:

www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/hope-creek-salem-issues.html . Specific information on the technical issues involving the Hope Creek “B” recirculation pump can be found in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System, or ADAMS, under Accession Numbers ML043480164 and ML043510279. ADAMS can be accessed at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html. Help in using ADAMS is available from the NRC Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737.

The special inspection team will document its findings and conclusions in a report to be issued within 45 days after the Jan. 5th meeting.

###