



NRC NEWS

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

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE AT HATCH NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Southern Nuclear Operating Company officials on Wednesday, April 12, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the Hatch nuclear power plant, located near Baxley in southern Georgia.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Appling County Courthouse in Baxley. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Hatch plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region II Administrator William Travers said. "This meeting is a chance for us to discuss that safety performance with the company, with local officials and with people living near the plant."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/hat_2005q4.pdf.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," depending on the safety significance of the issues involved.

The NRC said the Hatch plant operated safely during 2005 with all inspection findings being "green," or very low safety significance, and all performance indicators also indicating performance at levels requiring no additional NRC oversight in early 2005. However, during the second quarter of 2005, the NRC identified an emergency preparedness issue relating to the removal of the plant's Technical Support Center from service for more than a week without prior NRC approval. That issue was later determined to be "white," but a supplemental NRC inspection found Southern Nuclear's investigation and corrective actions for that issue to be adequate and the NRC plans no further action.

As a result, the NRC plans to conduct only routine baseline inspections at the plant for the rest of 2006. The NRC staff will also perform a non-routine inspection of the independent spent fuel storage installation at the Hatch plant.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region II Office in Atlanta, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md.

Current information for the Hatch plant is available on the NRC web site at:

www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT1/hat1_chart.html and
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT2/hat2_chart.html .

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