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NRC SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING JULY 18 TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE OF BYRON NUCLEAR POWER STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting with representatives of Exelon Generation Company, LLC, on Wednesday, July 18, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Byron Nuclear Power Station. The two-unit plant is located in Byron, Ill., roughly 17 miles southwest of Rockford.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. CDT at the Byron Station Training Building, 4450 N. German Church Road, room 107 in Byron. The NRC staff will present the results of the annual assessment, talk about the NRC and its range of activities and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Byron plant and the nation's other nuclear power facilities," said Region III Regional Administrator Charles Casto. "This meeting will allow us to speak directly with the local community about the plant's performance last year and the NRC's actions to make sure the plant continues to operate safely. Those actions include additional inspections in response to the events at the Fukushima Daiichi facilities to evaluate the safety of US nuclear plants. The reviews showed that Byron and other US plants continue to operate safely."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III office to plant officials addressed the performance of the plant during 2011 and will serve as the basis for the discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/byro_2011q4.pdf

Overall, the NRC found that the Byron facility operated safely in 2011.

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," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance.

All performance indicators and inspection findings for Byron Unit 1 during 2011 were determined to be “green.” The letter states that Unit 2 had one “white” finding of low-to-moderate safety significance. The white finding involved the failure to ensure that the nuts were appropriately tightened on a newly installed piece of equipment on one of two emergency diesel generators. The issue was identified during NRC required routine testing. It resulted in an NRC violation due to one diesel being inoperable for an 11-month period of time between equipment installation and testing and because the plant was unaware of the issue.

The utility has taken corrective actions to address the issue. The NRC completed a supplemental inspection to make sure the problems in work planning and procedures surrounding the finding were fully understood and resolved by the utility.

Byron will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants. Routine inspections are performed by two NRC resident inspectors assigned to the plant and inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md.

In addition to the day-to-day inspections performed by the resident inspectors, specific areas of plant operations to be inspected include radiation protection, the independent spent fuel storage installation, and fire protection.

The most current performance information for Byron is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BYRO1/byro1_chart.html (Unit1) and http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BYRO2/byro2_chart.html (Unit 2).

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