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NRC to Meet With Entergy on May 1st to Discuss Performance of Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with management of the Pilgrim nuclear power plant on Thursday, May 1, to discuss the agency's annual review of safety performance at the Plymouth, Mass., facility.

The public meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel Plymouth Harbor, at 180 Water St. in Plymouth. Prior to the session's adjournment, NRC staff will answer questions from the public on the performance of the plant, as well as address the agency's role in providing oversight of plant safety. There will be a security bag search at the entrance to the meeting.

Under the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators are used to assess plant performance. (Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance which, if exceeded, trigger additional NRC oversight.) The colors range from green, connoting very low safety or security significance, to white, yellow or red, for an issue of high significance.

Overall, the Pilgrim plant, which is owned and operated by Entergy Nuclear Operations Inc., operated safely during 2013. However, the plant is receiving additional scrutiny from the NRC due to two performance indicators crossing from green to white last year.

Based on the update of data following the third quarter of 2013, Pilgrim saw its performance indicator for Unplanned Scrams (shutdowns) with Complications shift from green to white. This indicator tracks unplanned scrams that require additional operator actions and that are more risk-significant than uncomplicated shutdowns. Subsequently, when 2013 fourth-quarter data was finalized, another indicator for the single-reactor plant also transitioned to white. That indicator covers Unplanned Scrams per 7,000 Hours of Operation and becomes white if a plant experiences more than three unplanned shutdowns during that period of time.

These changes led to Pilgrim moving to the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the NRC's [Action Matrix](#) (the third of five such columns that represent increasing levels of NRC oversight), resulting in more inspections by the NRC and greater interaction between NRC senior managers and plant management to reach a better understanding of actions taken or planned to address the problems.

“The combination of two white performance indicators in the area of unplanned shutdowns ensures that Pilgrim will draw further scrutiny from the NRC. As such, we plan to review what is behind these shutdowns and make certain that Entergy is appropriately addressing the root cause or causes,” NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. “We will pursue that not only through a supplemental team inspection but also during a discussion with the company at a meeting that will be open to the public. The results of those reviews and interactions will be readily available to the public.”

The NRC has also identified a cross-cutting theme at Pilgrim in the area of problem identification and resolution. NRC inspectors will be following up on the company’s work to address those issues, as well.

In 2013, the NRC devoted approximately 6,985 hours to inspections at Pilgrim.

The NRC issues reports on performance at each plant twice a year: during the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on a quarterly basis on the agency’s [website](#). Following the release of the Annual Assessment letters each March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results.

Normal inspections are carried out by the two Resident Inspectors assigned to Pilgrim. Reviews are also performed at the sites by specialist inspectors assigned to the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas to be inspected this year at Pilgrim are the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, emergency planning and radiological safety.

The [Annual Assessment letter](#) for Pilgrim, as well as the [notice](#) for the May 1st public meeting, are available on the NRC website. Current performance information is also available for [Pilgrim](#).