

No: II-14-055

November 20, 2014

CONTACT: Roger Hannah 404-997-4417
Joey Ledford 404-997-4416

NRC Increases Oversight and Inspection of St. Lucie Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is increasing its oversight of St. Lucie Unit 1 due to violations linked to plant operators' failure to ensure that the reactor's auxiliary building was watertight.

The St. Lucie plant is operated by FPL and is located in Jensen Beach, Fla., east of Port St. Lucie.

The finding, originally documented in a Sept. 24 NRC inspection report, was found to be "white," or of low to moderate safety significance. The NRC evaluates inspection findings and performance indicators at commercial power plants with a color-coded system which classifies them as green, white, yellow or red, in increasing order of safety significance. With the white finding, St. Lucie Unit 1 will receive an increased level of inspection and oversight.

FPL did not contest the safety significance of the finding, and has agreed to corrective actions that include repair of flood seals, flood response procedure revisions, additional site visual inspections of flood protection features and program improvements to ensure external flood barrier integrity.

In addition to the white finding, NRC also assessed a Severity Level III violation against FPL for failure to provide the NRC with complete and accurate information on the condition of the flood barriers at St. Lucie. Civil penalties for that violation were waived because St. Lucie has not been the subject of escalated enforcement actions for the last two years and has undertaken the necessary corrective actions.

"The St. Lucie plant continues to operate in a way that protects public health and safety," said Victor McCree, the NRC's Region II administrator. "However, the NRC wants to make sure that all nuclear plant operators recognize the importance of protecting safety equipment from possible flood damage."