

Christie Administration Working with NRC to Monitor Oyster Creek Nuclear Plant During Hurricane Sandy

Tuesday, October 30, 2012 Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Trenton, NJ – The Department of Environmental Protection and the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission are carefully monitoring the impacts Hurricane Sandy on operations at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant in Lacey Township, which last night suffered power outages, declared an “alert” due to rising water levels, and lost a portion of its warning alarm system.

Exelon’s Oyster Creek reactor, which was off-line prior to Sandy for previously scheduled refueling and maintenance operations, lost off-site power last night due to the storm. The plant is temporarily being powered by backup diesel generators and a combustion turbine engine, which are providing energy for water pumps that cool the fuel stored in the reactor until normal power sources are restored.

Also last night, even though Oyster Creek is off-line Exelon was required under NRC regulations to report to the NRC and DEP an “alert” that occurred at 8:45 p.m. due to rising water levels in its canal that provides cooling water to the plant’s intake system. The rising levels were the result of high tides, wind direction and storm surge that were caused by the storm. The notification of an “alert” is the second lowest NRC action level.

The NRC in a statement noted that Oyster Creek remains in “safe condition,” with agency inspectors on site. “It also anticipates that water levels will abate within the next several hours,” returning to normal levels.

In addition, due to the power outages, Oyster Creek also reported a loss of operability of 21 of its warning sirens in its service area. It reported the situation, as required, to the NRC, as well as the DEP and state Office of Emergency Management. Efforts are being made to restore all sirens to operable status. Even though some sirens are out, there are other warning systems in place.

DEP nuclear engineers monitor daily operations at the state’s power plants on a regular basis and will continue to monitor their status throughout the storm and its aftermath. Under the New Jersey Radiation Accident Response Act, the DEP and State Police coordinate and implement comprehensive state, county, and municipal response to nuclear emergencies and establish requirements for protecting the public in the event of nuclear emergencies.

The state has highly trained staff ready to initiate, at a moment’s notice, an effective response to any nuclear power plant issue.

The NRC news release on monitoring of nuclear power plants during the storm

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