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Walking a Nuclear Tightrope: Unlearned Lessons of Year-plus Reactor Outages

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The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) seems to be following the script of the movie *Groundhog Day*, reliving the same bad event again and again. This event—an outage at a nuclear power plant that lasts more than a year—has happened 51 times at 41 different reactors around the United States and shows no signs of stopping.

Each such occurrence results from a violation of federal regulations that require plant owners to find and fix safety problems in a timely, effective manner, coupled with the NRC's inability to detect those violations (allowing problems to multiply and worsen as a result). The accident at Three Mile Island might have been prevented had the NRC broken this cycle.

Since the nuclear power industry is unable to script Hollywood-style happy endings once events have begun to spin out of control, Congress must compel the NRC to be a more aggressive enforcer of federal safety regulations. Otherwise, declining safety performance could result in a nuclear disaster rather than a costly year-plus outage.

In *Walking a Nuclear Tightrope: Unlearned Lessons of Year-plus Reactor Outages*, the Union of Concerned Scientists identifies common themes among extended outages and steps the NRC must take to end these costly and avoidable threats to public health and the U.S. economy.

UCS prepared a case study for each year-plus reactor outage. To open a PDF of an individual case study, click on the reactor unit name listed below:

Reactor Unit	State	Outage Began	Outage Ended
Browns Ferry Unit 1	AL	03/22/75	09/24/76
Browns Ferry Unit 1	AL	03/19/85	n/a
Browns Ferry Unit 2	AL	03/22/75	09/10/76
Browns Ferry Unit 2	AL	09/15/84	05/24/91
Browns Ferry Unit 3	AL	09/07/83	11/28/84
Browns Ferry Unit 3	AL	03/09/85	11/19/95
Brunswick Unit 1	NC	04/21/92	02/11/94

Brunswick Unit 2	NC	04/21/92	05/15/93
Calvert Cliffs Unit 1	MD	05/05/89	10/04/90
Calvert Cliffs Unit 2	MD	03/17/89	05/04/91
Clinton	IL	09/05/96	05/27/99
Crystal River Unit 3	FL	09/02/96	02/06/98
D.C. Cook Unit 1	MI	09/09/97	12/21/00
D.C. Cook Unit 2	MI	09/09/97	06/25/00
Davis-Besse	OH	06/09/85	12/24/86
Davis-Besse	OH	02/16/02	03/16/04
Fermi Unit 1	MI	10/05/66	07/18/70
Fermi Unit 2	MI	12/25/93	01/18/95
FitzPatrick	NY	11/27/91	01/23/93
Fort St. Vrain	CO	06/13/84	04/11/86
Indian Point Unit 3	NY	03/25/82	06/08/83
Indian Point Unit 3	NY	02/27/93	07/02/95
LaSalle Unit 1	IL	09/22/96	08/13/98
LaSalle Unit 2	IL	09/20/96	04/11/99
Maine Yankee	ME	01/14/95	01/18/96
Millstone Unit 2	CT	02/20/96	05/11/99
Millstone Unit 3	CT	03/30/96	07/01/98
Nine Mile Point Unit 1	NY	03/20/82	07/05/83
Nine Mile Point Unit 1	NY	12/19/87	08/12/90
Oyster Creek	NJ	02/12/83	11/01/84
Palisades	MI	08/11/73	10/01/74
Palo Verde Unit 1	AZ	03/05/89	07/05/90
Peach Bottom Unit 2	PA	04/28/84	07/13/85
Peach Bottom Unit 2	PA	03/31/87	05/22/89
Peach Bottom Unit 3	PA	03/31/87	12/11/89
Pilgrim	MA	12/10/83	12/30/84

Pilgrim	MA	04/11/86	06/15/89
Rancho Seco	CA	12/26/85	04/11/88
Salem Unit 1	NJ	05/16/95	04/20/98
Salem Unit 2	NJ	06/07/95	08/30/97
San Onofre Unit 1	CA	02/26/82	11/28/84
Sequoyah Unit 1	TN	08/22/85	11/10/88
Sequoyah Unit 1	TN	03/02/93	04/20/94
Sequoyah Unit 2	TN	08/22/85	05/13/88
South Texas Project Unit 1	TX	02/04/93	02/25/94
South Texas Project Unit 2	TX	02/03/93	05/22/94
St. Lucie Unit 1	FL	02/26/83	05/16/84
Surry Unit 2	VA	02/04/79	08/19/80
Surry Unit 2	VA	09/10/88	09/19/89
Three Mile Island Unit 1	PA	02/17/79	10/09/85
Turkey Point Unit 3	FL	02/11/81	04/11/82

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