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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER TWINKLE ANDRESS CAVANAUGH TO TOUR FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT NEAR DOTHAN ON FRIDAY, APRIL 1

Montgomery – In order to gather a full picture of Alabama’s energy-production capabilities, and in light of recent events occurring in Japan, Public Service Commissioner Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh announced she will visit and tour the Joseph N. Farley Nuclear Plant, located near Dothan, on Friday, April 1.

“As the mother of a three-year-old, I understand she will grow up in a world that will be more dependent, not less dependent, upon nuclear energy,” Cavanaugh said. “It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the nuclear energy we generate is safe, dependable and good for the environment and surrounding areas. I am confident my visit to the Farley Plant will provide those assurances”

Cavanaugh noted that using coal to produce electricity is becoming increasingly expensive due to expanding federal regulations and guidelines, which is forcing nuclear power to take a broader role in energy production.

“If we are going to continue growing our economy, we must include more forms of domestic energy in our overall production puzzle – and nuclear is an important piece in that puzzle,” Cavanaugh said. “At the same time, we must learn from the on-going tragic events in Japan and ensure that our nuclear plants maintain the highest safety standards and protocols moving forward.”

Though such plants are regulated by the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Cavanaugh said she feels it is important that the PSC have a “bird’s-eye view” of the operations, maintenance and procedures of facilities like Farley.

Construction of the Farley plant began in 1971 with Unit 1 commencing production in 1977 followed by Unit 2 in 1981. The combined production capacity of the two units is 1,776 megawatts, and the plant is responsible for about 19 percent of the total electricity supplied to customers by the Alabama Power Company.

The plant, which operates 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, employs about 850 individuals. Its 1,850-acre site houses the two reactors, six cooling towers, a state-of-the-art control room, turbine building, low and high voltage switchyards and training facilities.

Cavanaugh said once she completes her tour, she will report her findings to her fellow PSC commissioners.