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NRC FINES FPL \$70,000 FOR SPENT FUEL ISSUE AT TURKEY POINT NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is citing Florida Power & Light Co. for three violations and has proposed a \$70,000 civil penalty against the company for an issue with the Unit 3 spent fuel pool racks at the Turkey Point nuclear power plant near Homestead, Fla., about 20 miles south of Miami.

In December 2009, the NRC became aware that the neutron-absorbing material called Boraflex in the Unit 3 spent fuel pool had degraded below the levels spelled out in the plant's design basis documents. Although FPL had taken compensatory measures including the addition of soluble boron, the regulatory requirements that ensure the spent fuel pool remains safe were not met.

The company's actions ensured the pool's condition did not pose an immediate safety concern, but the NRC found that FPL did not promptly identify and correct the condition. The NRC issued the civil penalty because the agency felt the company did not report the condition in a timely fashion. The NRC has determined that the issue has low to moderate safety significance and may result in additional inspections.

The NRC staff held a regulatory and enforcement conference with FPL in April, and the company disagreed with some aspects of the NRC's evaluation. After considering information provided by FPL, the NRC staff issued its final determination including the three violations and \$70,000 fine.

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