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Tel. 301-504-2240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$25,000 FINE AGAINST
WASHINGTON PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is proposing to fine the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) \$25,000 for an alleged violation of NRC requirements concerning the containment atmospheric control system (CAC) at Washington Nuclear Project No. 2 located 11 miles north of Richland, Washington. NRC Regional Administrator John B. Martin notified the company of the alleged violation by letter on February 6, 1992.

On October 31, 1991, WPPSS reported that both hydrogen recombiner systems at WNP-2 were inoperable, since they would not function in the automatic mode, from before initial plant startup in 1984 until August 1991, due to installation of an improper component. The hydrogen recombiners, which constitute the CAC, are necessary to reduce the consequences of certain potential accidents. WNP-2 is required to shut down within 12 hours if either recombiner is out of service longer than 30 days.

During an inspection conducted November 4 through December 8, 1991, NRC inspectors identified information supporting the alleged violation.

The alleged violation has been categorized as Severity Level III on a scale of I to V, with Level I representing a violation of very significant regulatory concern and Level V a violation of minor concern. The base civil penalty for Severity Level III is \$50,000. The base civil penalty was reduced 50 percent, resulting in a proposed civil penalty of \$25,000, because the Supply System's corrective actions were aggressive, prompt and thorough.

Two Severity Level IV violations were also identified. One involves seven CAC pipe supports which were not installed as designed. The other involves late notification by WPPSS to the NRC of the inoperability of the hydrogen recombiners. No additional civil penalty was proposed.

WPPSS now has 30 days to submit a written statement to the NRC admitting or denying the alleged violations, explaining the reasons for them if admitted, stating the corrective actions which have been or will be taken and the date when full compliance will be achieved.

The Supply System also has 30 days to pay the proposed fine or to protest it, in whole or in part. If the fine is protested and later imposed, WPPSS may request a public hearing.

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