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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE TU ELECTRIC \$25,000
FOR APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT COMANCHE PEAK PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has informed TU Electric that it proposes to fine the company \$25,000 for violating NRC requirements in December 1991 during restart of Unit 1 of Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station near Glen Rose, Texas.

TU Electric has 30 days to pay or protest the civil penalty. If a protest is denied by the NRC staff, the utility may ask for a hearing.

The situation which brought about this enforcement action occurred as the utility was bringing Comanche Peak Unit 1 back into service after a shutdown for refueling and maintenance. On December 6, 1991, an instrument and control engineer discovered that the plant had entered the hot standby mode (before actual power operations had begun) with two cross-connect cooling system valves closed. This condition would not have prevented the plant's emergency core cooling system from working, but it would have kept it from responding fully to the range of loss-of-coolant accidents which the plant is designed to handle.

Once the non-conforming condition was discovered, TU Electric immediately notified NRC, correctly aligned the valves in question, checked to see if any other valves were mispositioned, and modified appropriate valve alignment procedures.

An NRC inspection found that the mispositioned valves went undetected for 51 hours by licensed control room operators. NRC also determined that, because of a flaw in the plant's surveillance program, a test was not performed that would have revealed the incorrect valve alignment. Inspectors also attributed the violation to inattention to detail and poor communications during plant start-up.

In his letter notifying TU Electric of the civil penalty, Robert D. Martin, NRC regional administrator in Arlington, Texas, said the fine was reduced to half the \$50,000 base amount because of the utility's prompt and extensive corrective measures. He said the incident was a "significant regulatory concern," although the safety significance was lower than it might have been because the plant was not at power operation and was restarting after an outage of several weeks.

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