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NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE DUQUESNE LIGHT COMPANY \$50,000

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has cited Duquesne Light Company for an alleged violation of NRC requirements found during an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) inspection at the Beaver Valley Power Station, Unit 2, from November 9 through the 19, 1993. The staff proposed a \$50,000 fine.

Whenever there is a loss of off-site electric power, the diesels start to provide essential electricity to equipment important to safety. A device, called a sequencer, electrically connects important safety equipment to the diesels in a specific order or sequence to prevent overloading of the diesels. A problem with the emergency diesels was discovered by Duquesne Light Company employees at Beaver Valley 2 on November 4, 1993, when the "sequencer" on one diesel was being tested and it failed to automatically connect important safety systems to the electrical output of that diesel generator. Testing of the other diesel on November 6 showed that same failure. The AIT was sent to Beaver Valley to help the NRC more fully understand why both EDG load sequencers failed during required tests.

Duquesne Light's investigation showed that the failures were the result of a malfunction of the digital microprocessor-based timer/relays. The AIT concluded that the root cause of the failures was inadequate design control when the licensee switched from electromechanical relays to microprocessor-based relays in 1990. The team determined that the licensee did not take into consideration the susceptibility of microprocessor-based equipment to voltage disturbances and electromagnetic interference, even though this vulnerability was well known at the time of the design change.

In a letter to Duquesne Light, Thomas T. Martin, Regional Administrator, NRC Region I, said, "The common mode failure of the relays in each of the two emergency trains during a LOCA (loss of coolant accident), coincident with a loss of off-site power, could result in the complete failure of both EDG load sequencers. This condition would prevent the emergency diesel generators from automatically energizing the safety-related loads, thus significantly reducing your ability to automatically

mitigate the consequences of the accident."

The licensee was cited for failing to establish measures to assure that regulatory requirements and design bases are correctly translated into design requirements. For this the NRC staff proposes a \$50,000 fine.

In the letter, the NRC also recognized that Duquesne Light has taken a number of actions to correct the problem and to prevent recurrence.

Duquesne Light has 30 days either to pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that all or part of it be withdrawn. The utility also has 30 days to admit or deny the alleged violations, to describe the actions it has taken or plans to take to prevent their happening in the future, and to give the date by which it expects to be in full compliance with NRC requirements.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of Ohio were informed of this enforcement action.

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