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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$200,000 FINE AGAINST CLEVELAND ELECTRIC
ILLUMINATING FOR VIOLATIONS AT PERRY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$200,000 fine against Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company for violations of NRC requirements associated with fouling of strainers which potentially affected the shutdown cooling system at the Perry Nuclear Power Station.

The plant is located at North Perry, Ohio.

The fouling was caused by debris in the suppression pool, a large pool of water in the lower portion of the reactor containment. The water may be used for cooling the reactor core during a reactor shutdown or under certain accident conditions.

As a result of the fouling -- first discovered in 1989 and then again in 1992 -- the shutdown cooling system might not have been able to provide long term reactor cooling for 100 days as expected following a major reactor accident.

The suppression pool has subsequently been adequately cleaned, and the strainers were replaced with a modified design. The utility identified the material fouling the strainers as being fibers from filters in the containment ventilation system as well as other debris in the suppression pool.

The utility was cited for failing to take adequate corrective action when the fouling and debris problems were identified in 1989 and 1992; for failing to identify and remove the fibrous material from the suppression pool in early 1993; and for failing to adequately clean the containment to the utility's own standards prior to a May 1993 NRC inspection.

In notifying the utility of the fine, NRC Regional Administrator stated: "This violation resulted from your failure to promptly recognize, adequately assess, and correct the fouling, deformation, and cracking of the [shutdown cooling system] strainers and the unacceptable level of cleanliness of the suppression pool."

He added, "The failure of your personnel to quickly recognize the safety significance of suppression pool cleanliness is of particular

concern in the light of the serious safety consequences of strainer fouling...."

Cleveland Electric Illuminating has until September 30, 1993, to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

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