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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$75,000 FINE AGAINST WASHINGTON
PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is proposing to fine the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) \$75,000 for alleged violations of NRC requirements regarding the maintenance of reactor core stability. These violations were directly related to the August 15, 1992, power oscillation event at Washington Nuclear Project No. 2 (WNP-2), located 11 miles north of Richland, Washington. NRC Regional Administrator John B. Martin notified the company of the alleged violations by letter on December 14, 1992.

During an inspection conducted October 5 through October 21, 1992, NRC inspectors identified the following alleged violations:

- use of procedures which did not provide adequate instructions or acceptance criteria for developing control rod patterns which would prevent core power oscillations;
- failure of the WNP-2 Nuclear Safety Assurance Group to review a Boiling Water Reactor Owners' Group letter regarding potential reactor power oscillations; and,
- inadequate review of the mixed core designs used for the summer 1992 reload and the prior reload of the WNP-2 reactor core.

The alleged violations have been categorized as a Severity Level III problem on a scale of I to V, with Level I representing very significant regulatory concern and Level V minor concern. The base civil penalty for Severity Level III is \$50,000.

The base civil penalty was increased due to poor past performance in management and quality oversight, and because industry and NRC guidance regarding reactor power oscillations was available to Supply System staff. The Supply System was credited for prompt and aggressive corrective actions to address both the management and technical concerns related to the event. The net result is the proposed civil penalty of \$75,000.

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 was or 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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