

No. 91-146  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Monday, November 25, 1991)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$100,000 FINE OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY  
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has cited Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH), owner of the Seabrook nuclear power plant, for three alleged violations of NRC requirements, namely (1) failure to assure that radiographs for four welds taken during the construction of Seabrook were retained; (2) failure of records of two other radiograph packages to be signed by a Yankee Atomic Electric Company reviewer, as required; and (3) failure to assure that certain other radiographs contained images that met the requirements of the codes and standards for the quality of such radiographs. The staff proposes to fine PSNH \$100,000 for the third violation.

Radiography is the taking of x-ray like pictures of the welding of piping and other metal components for the purposes of establishing that the welding meets applicable codes and standards of quality.

These citations come from the findings of inspections done at Seabrook between March and September of this year, after the company had reported to the NRC staff its discovery that some radiograph records were missing during a search for them in December 1990.

The NRC staff has also done extensive detailed analyses of the radiographs that did exist for important safety systems in the plant, and the company more recently submitted radiographs done of welds where the originals could not be located, and these have shown no problems with the actual acceptability of the welds that were radiographed.

In addition, last June, the NRC staff issued a citation to PSNH for having, in the past, accepted six radiographs that later were judged not to have met the ASME code when they first were made. In response to this citation, which involved the review of 90 additional radiographs, the utility found 47 to have the same code acceptability deficiencies as the original six.

In a letter informing the company of the alleged violations and proposed fine, Thomas T. Martin, Regional Administrator,

Region I, said, "...the NRC recognizes that the deficiencies were limited to a small portion of the set of approximately 2700 radiographs, and that you had taken other actions to ensure the quality of construction at the facility. Furthermore, the NRC also recognizes that the subsequent radiographs in 1991 confirmed the quality of the affected welds in each case."

"Nonetheless, to emphasize the importance of radiographs meeting all ASME Code requirements to fully demonstrate the quality of welds, I have been authorized, after consultation with the Commission, to issue the enclosed Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalty (Notice) in the amount of \$100,000 for the Severity Level III violation set forth in Section I of the enclosed Notice." Although the base civil penalty amount for a Severity Level III violation is \$50,000, Mr. Martin said that the penalty was increased because "the associated radiograph deficiencies...were not identified and corrected until the 1990-1991 time frame...[and]...the actions were not taken until after NRC inquiries concerning this matter as a result of allegations and information received from other sources."

The company has been given 30 days to either pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that part or all of it be withdrawn, giving its reasons for any such request. The company also has been given 30 days to admit or deny the alleged violations, to give reasons for the violations, if admitted, 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 State of New Hampshire has been informed of this enforcement action.

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