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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$15,000 CIVIL PENALTY AGAINST DUKE POWER  
FOR ALLEGED VIOLATION OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT OCONEE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$15,000 civil penalty against Duke Power Company for alleged noncompliance with NRC requirements at the Oconee nuclear power plant, operated by the company near Seneca, South Carolina.

In a Notice of Violation sent to the company on August 2, 1994, NRC officials said the violation involved failure to implement required procedures for identification and independent verification of fuel assembly location during movement of fuel from the spent (used) fuel storage pool to the Unit 1 reactor core. The NRC said this resulted in a fuel assembly being retrieved from the wrong spent fuel pool location on May 26, 1994, and placed in the reactor core. Duke workers discovered the problem later in the refueling sequence and the error was corrected.

The NRC said the violation was categorized as a Severity Level IV which does not usually involve consideration of a civil penalty. However, the agency said this was the fourth occurrence involving failure to identify and verify fuel assembly locations at Oconee since October of 1990. The agency said the company's failure to implement adequate corrective actions for previous violations has caused the problem to become a matter of regulatory concern.

The company has 30 days in which to pay the civil penalty or to protest its imposition.

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