

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Region III Office of Public Affairs
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NRC TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH COMMONWEALTH EDISON
ON APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT BYRON PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet January 24 with representatives of Commonwealth Edison Company for a predecisional enforcement conference on apparent engineering and maintenance violations at the Byron Nuclear Power Station. The facility is near Byron, Illinois.

The conference will be at 10 a.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. The meeting is open to public observation.

Discussions will focus on ComEd's failure to correct conditions which would have prevented proper operation of a system which cools certain safety equipment that would be used in certain emergency conditions. Over a three-year period, beginning in 1993, the utility's tests showed that basins beneath the plant's mechanical draft cooling towers had excessive silt levels. Routine tests also revealed partial deterioration of trash racks which prevent debris from being sucked into the equipment cooling water system. Conditions were corrected late last year, when ComEd cleaned out the silt in the basins and replaced the degraded trash racks.

The decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a fine, will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later date.

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