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NRC STAFF IDENTIFIES NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
WARRANTING INCREASED REGULATORY ATTENTION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff advised the Commission today that it has identified three nuclear power plants which have safety-related weaknesses that warrant increased NRC regulatory attention.

These facilities were identified at a January meeting during which senior NRC managers conducted their semi-annual review of the performance of operating nuclear power plants and nuclear fuel cycle facilities.

The three plants are:

Units 2 and 3 at Commonwealth Edison Company's Dresden nuclear power plant near Morris, Illinois, (first placed on the list in June 1987 and removed in December 1988 and added again in January 1992); and

Unit 3 at the Indian Point nuclear power plant near Buchanan, New York, owned by the Power Authority of the State of New York (added to the list in June 1993).

In addition, the staff discussed two reactors at one site which are shut down and NRC approval is needed before they can be restarted. Reactors in this category are Units 1 and 3 at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry nuclear power plant near Athens, Alabama. Both units have been on the list since April of 1986.

The staff also told the Commission that Units 1 and 2 at the South Texas nuclear power plant owned by Houston Lighting and Power Company and located near Bay City have been removed from the group of facilities needing increased regulatory attention because effective action has been taken to correct identified problems and programs for improved performance have been implemented. The South Texas units were added to the list in June 1993.

The staff also provided the Commission with information concerning three nuclear power plants which show signs of a

declining trend in safety performance warranting closer attention by the staff. They are the Cooper nuclear power plant near Nebraska City, Nebraska, owned by the Nebraska Public Power District (added to the trending list in January 1994) and Units 1 and 2 at Commonwealth Edison's Quad Cities nuclear power plant located near Moline, Illinois (also added to the trending list in January 1994).

In addition, the staff informed the Commission of two plants that have been removed from trending status due to their successful efforts to correct the adverse trend. These facilities are Commonwealth Edison Company's two-unit LaSalle nuclear power plant located near Ottawa, Illinois. The two reactors were added to the trending list in January 1994.

Since 1991, the staff, as part of its semi-annual review, has conducted a pilot program to provide positive reinforcement and recognition of outstanding safety performance in the nuclear power industry. The pilot program has recently been modified to alleviate perception problems with the process while retaining the option to recognize those plants that have achieved superior safety performance. As a result, nuclear power plants with a sustained high level of safety performance will no longer be identified as part of the semi-annual review but, instead, will be identified as part of the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) review which the staff conducts at each nuclear power plant site approximately every 18 months.

In the future, if a superior level of safety performance is identified as part of the SALP process, the utility owners of a nuclear power plant will be advised that there will be an increase in the length of the next SALP cycle from 18 to 24 months and that the staff's planned inspection resources may be reduced. In addition, the superior level of safety performance will be recognized in a separate letter from the Commission's Executive Director for Operations.