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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC LICENSING BOARD SCHEDULES PREHEARING
CONFERENCE IN RIVER BEND PROCEEDING

An Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has scheduled a prehearing conference October 4 in Rockville, Maryland, in a proceeding involving a transfer of operating control of the River Bend nuclear station from Gulf States Utilities (GSU) to Entergy Operations, Inc., through a corporate merger. River Bend is located near St. Francisville, Louisiana.

The conference will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the Licensing Board's hearing room on the Third Floor at Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike.

In January 1993, GSU, which owns 70 percent of River Bend, filed requests with the NRC to 1) transfer control over the plant's operation to Entergy Operations, Inc., and 2) reflect a change in ownership of GSU, which through a merger would become a wholly owned subsidiary of Entergy Corporation.

Cajun Electric Power Cooperative, which owns 30 percent of River Bend, filed a petition to intervene and requested a hearing on the proposed license changes. Cajun alleged that both the transfer of operating control and GSU's merger with Entergy may reduce safety at River Bend because of underfunding.

The NRC staff, after evaluating the proposed changes to the operating license, in December 1993 issued the license amendments requested.

On January 27 a Licensing Board admitted Cajun as an intervener in the proceeding. On an appeal by GSU, the Commission on August 24 affirmed the decision to admit Cajun.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the setting of a final schedule of the steps necessary prior to commencing the evidentiary hearing, a date for the hearing, pending discovery disputes and central issues for litigation.

Taking part in the conference will be representatives of GSU, Cajun and the NRC.

Members of the Licensing Board are the following
Administrative Judges from the NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing
Board Panel: B. Paul Cotter, Jr., Chairman; Dr. Richard F. Cole
and Dr. Peter S. Lam.

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