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NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE THE NORTHEAST NUCLEAR ENERGY COMPANY
\$50,000 FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF NRC REQUIREMENTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has cited the Northeast Nuclear Energy Company (NNEC) for three violations of NRC requirements identified during an inspection of the Millstone 2 nuclear power plant near New London, Connecticut, in February and March. The staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine for two of the alleged violations.

Two violations of NRC regulations for which the fine is proposed involve the licensee's alleged failure to promptly identify and correct a significant condition adverse to quality that existed at the facility and the failure to adequately review engineering services the company used that could have led to identification of the adverse condition. The condition involved the potential pressure locking of the plant's containment sump recirculation valves. If these valves failed to open within a certain period of time during an accident after depletion of the refueling water storage tank, a complete loss of the safety injection and containment spray cooling systems would occur. These safety systems would be used if primary cooling water drained from the reactor vessel in the unlikely event of a major accident.

"The NRC is particularly concerned that you had opportunities to identify this condition since 1990, as a result of reports issued by contractors in September 1990 and October 1994," NRC Region I Administrator Thomas T. Martin, said in a letter to the licensee. "However, the safety-related evaluations made by those contractors were not adequately reviewed by you in a timely manner."

It was not until the NRC raised questions regarding the adequacy of the 1990 review during an inspection in March 1994, that the licensee assigned an engineering contractor to reexamine the valves and their potential for failure, Mr. Martin said. During an enforcement conference on April 18, 1995, the licensee maintained that the motor operated valves would have functioned properly had they been called upon to work. "Nonetheless," Mr. Martin said, the licensee's actions between 1990 and 1995

"demonstrated deficiencies in your control of procured engineering services, as well as with the identification of potential safety issues. These deficiencies contributed to your failure to identify this condition adverse to quality sooner."

The third violation for which no civil penalty is proposed, involved the licensee's alleged failure to repair or evaluate the significance of leakage past a containment sump recirculation suction check valve, creating a condition that allowed the top portion of the valve, to fill with water, creating an opportunity for failure of the valves. The licensee has subsequently taken "prompt and comprehensive actions," Mr. Martin noted, to correct the violation and related condition, and preclude recurrence.

NNEC has 30 days to admit or deny the alleged violations and pay the proposed fine or request in writing that part or all of it be withdrawn.

The state of Connecticut has been informed of this enforcement action.

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