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FOR IMMEDIATE

NRC, SUPPLY SYSTEM OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS
APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT WNP-2

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold two predecisional enforcement conferences next week with officials of the Washington Public Power Supply System to discuss apparent violations associated with the restart of the WNP-2 nuclear power plant in June and July.

The conferences will be at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 22, at the NRC Region IV office in Arlington, Texas. The Supply System operates the WNP-2 plant near Richland, Wash. The meetings will be open to the public for observation; NRC officials will be available later for questions.

At 9 a.m., the parties will discuss five apparent violations found by an NRC inspection of activities associated with the restart of the plant in June after a refueling outage. The apparent violations include failures to test certain equipment as required, a failure to have procedures in place to ensure that certain equipment is tested and changing reactor operating modes by increasing reactor power while a required safety system was declared inoperable.

At 1 p.m., the parties will discuss three apparent violations found by a second NRC inspection conducted of plant restart activities during June and July. The apparent violations concern failures to follow command-and-control procedures as the reactor was nearing criticality, and failures to establish adequate procedures to direct those activities. (A criticality is a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction).

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that NRC has made a final determination that violations did occur or that enforcement action, such as a monetary fine, will be taken. The purpose is to discuss the

apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the Supply System an opportunity to challenge or correct portions of NRC inspection reports; and for the licensee to outline its corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any enforcement action will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made later by senior NRC officials.