

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Region III Office of Public Affairs
801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT: RIII-97-48

May 22, 1997

CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663
Angela Dauginas 630/829-9662
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

NRC TO HOLD A CONFERENCE WITH COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY
ON AN APPARENT DISCRIMINATION VIOLATION AT BRAIDWOOD PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet May 29 with representatives of Commonwealth Edison Company for a predecisional enforcement conference on an apparent employment discrimination violation at the Braidwood plant near Joliet, Illinois.

The meeting will start at 10:00 a.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. It will be open to public observation.

Discussion will focus on an NRC investigation that concluded that the utility was involved in a 1994 incident in which discrimination occurred. NRC investigators found that two supervisors of the utility's security contractor, Burns Security Services, were threatened by Burns with being fired and losing their access authorization to the Braidwood plant because they discussed security concerns with NRC inspectors.

NRC regulations prohibit an NRC licensee from discriminating against an employee for engaging in certain protected activities, including raising safety issues. NRC holds its licensees responsible for ensuring that contractors working at its facilities comply with NRC requirements.

The decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean the NRC has determined that a discrimination violation did occur 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 determination that an apparent violation occurred; 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.

#