

No. 93-168
Tel. 301-504-2240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Friday, November 12, 1993)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$75,000 FINE AGAINST
WASHINGTON PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is proposing to fine the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) \$75,000 for a violation of NRC requirements regarding the operability of safety related systems at Washington Nuclear Project No. 2 located 11 miles north of Richland, Washington. NRC Regional Administrator B. H. Faulkenberry notified the Supply Systems of the violation by letter on November 10, 1993.

During inspections conducted May 3 through August 2, 1993, NRC inspectors found that on September 3, 1991, July 6, 1992 and July 11, 1992, Supply System operators violated a procedural restriction by aligning both redundant trains of the residual heat removal system (RHR) in a containment cooling mode at the same time during power operation.

In the highly unlikely event of a loss-of-offsite power concurrent with a loss-of-coolant accident, operation of the system in this manner could have caused both redundant RHR trains to become inoperable.

This violation has been categorized as Severity Level III on a scale of I to V, with Level I representing very significant regulatory concern and Level V minor concern. The base civil penalty for Severity Level III is \$50,000.

The Supply System was credited with identifying the violation and a general improvement in plant operations was recognized. However, the proposed penalty was increased to \$75,000 due to poor past performance in adherence to plant procedures and due to corrective actions which focused on procedure quality without giving adequate attention to procedure adherence.

WPPSS now has 30 days to submit a written statement to the NRC admitting or denying the violation, explaining the reasons for it if admitted, stating the corrective actions which have been or will be taken and the date when full compliance will be achieved.

The Supply System also has 30 days to pay the proposed fine or to protest it, in whole or in part. If the fine is protested and later imposed, WPPSS may request a public hearing.

#