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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$55,000 FINE AGAINST SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$55,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority for violations of NRC requirements relating to emergency batteries at the Sequoyah nuclear power plant near Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee.

On July 24 of this year, a senior reactor operator failed to properly realign a spare vital direct current battery to its board, resulting in the board being inoperable for about 30 hours. The direct current batteries provide backup power to some safety equipment if the plant should lose both offsite power and the emergency diesel generators.

In a letter to TVA, NRC Regional Administrator Luis Reyes said that "the actual safety and risk significance of the inoperable vital battery board was mitigated" by a spare battery charger, but "these violations are of significant regulatory concern." Reyes' letter mentioned the fact that multiple opportunities existed to prevent and detect the inoperability and referred to previous events involving similar operator errors and problems with component labeling.

The first violation cited involved the failure to meet Technical Specification requirements to maintain four DC vital battery channels energized and operable. The second violation was the failure to follow procedures associated with realigning the spare battery to a battery board. The third violation was the failure to follow administrative procedures to ensure that the positions of the DC breakers were subject to independent verification.

The NRC staff has proposed a \$55,000 civil penalty for the three violations together.

The company has 30 days from receipt of the Notice of Violation to either pay the fine or protest its imposition.

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