

No. 93-171
Tel. 301-504-2240
1993)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Wednesday, November 17,

NRC STAFF PROPOSED \$50,000 FINE AGAINST CONSUMERS POWER COMPANY
FOR VIOLATIONS OF NRC SAFETY REQUIREMENT AT BIG ROCK POINT PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine against Consumers Power Company for violations of NRC safety requirements involved in two incidents in June and August 1993 at the Big Rock Point Nuclear Power Plant, located near Charlevoix, Michigan.

Both incidents occurred while the plant was shut down for refueling.

On June 29, 1993, the plant performed a routine surveillance test involving movement of control rods. The reactor containment is required to be sealed during this test. Plant operators had earlier drained a cooling water pipe and did not realize that the drained pipe provided a path from the containment.

The reactor containment, a metal sphere surrounding the reactor, is required to be sealed during plant operations, refueling, and certain test procedures to prevent the release of radioactivity to the environment in the unlikely event of an accident.

There were no safety consequences resulting from the failure to have containment integrity during the control rod test.

The second incident occurred during a pressure test of the reactor cooling system on August 24, 1993. The pressure in the reactor cooling system increased to the point where a steam safety valve opened to reduce the pressure.

An NRC inspection following the incident found that the test had been conducted in a disorganized manner. The inspectors determined that the test, which is performed only during a refueling outage and which involves unusual plant conditions, was treated as routine and implemented without sufficient preparation.

Consumers Power Company has until December 9, 1993, to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and

subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

#