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## NRC PROPOSES \$13,750 FINE AGAINST WESTINGHOUSE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is proposing to fine Westinghouse Electric Corporation \$13,750 for violations of NRC requirements at the company's commercial nuclear fuel facility in Columbia, South Carolina.

The plant manufactures nuclear fuel for use in civilian nuclear power plants.

The proposed enforcement action results from an NRC inspection conducted August 25 to 29 at the plant to review circumstances surrounding June 23 and August 25 events involving failures of controls designed to prevent an inadvertent criticality, or nuclear chain reaction, at the facility. As a result of the events, Westinghouse staff discovered that various vessels used to process nuclear material were larger than assumed in the criticality safety analysis, and therefore one of the safety controls designed to prevent an accidental criticality was not present.

The NRC inspection revealed significant weaknesses with Westinghouse's implementation of its nuclear criticality safety program. NRC intervention was necessary to identify the scope and magnitude of the problems and to ensure that appropriate corrective actions were taken to establish that the existing plant conditions matched the safety conditions established in the facility's license.

The violations involved the failure to : (1) conduct adequate incident investigations, identify root causes, and take timely corrective actions; (2) conduct adequate criticality safety evaluations; (3) functionally verify that installed safety controls matched the design documents; (4) update criticality safety evaluations following change; (5) control criticality safety evaluation records; and (6) develop or implement various nuclear criticality safety procedures and policies that cover certain license conditions, including requirements to notify the NRC.

In notifying Westinghouse of the proposed fine, NRC stated: "These violations are significant because they substantially degraded the approved processes in the license used to establish and maintain the safety program for processing SNM [special nuclear material] and are indicative of a significant lack of attention or carelessness towards licensed responsibilities."

Westinghouse has 30 days to pay the civil penalty or protest its imposition.

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