

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
Arlington, Texas 76011-8064

RIV: 98-29
CONTACT: Victor Dricks
OFFICE: 817/860-8128
PAGER: (888)625-1086
E-MAIL: bwh@nrc.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 9, 1998)

**NRC TO MEET WITH WASHINGTON PUBLIC POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM
TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATION AT WNP-2**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a predecisional enforcement conference July 13 with officials of the Washington Public Power Supply System, the operators of the WNP-2 nuclear power plant near Richland, Washington, to discuss an apparent violation of NRC requirements.

The conference will begin at 10:45 a.m. at NRC's Region IV office in Arlington, Texas. The meeting will be open to public observation; NRC officials will be available afterwards for questions.

The apparent violation was identified during an NRC special inspection conducted February 9-12, involving personnel from Region IV, the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation from NRC headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee

The alleged violation involves the adequacy of methods used in calculating the behavior of fuel under some operating conditions. As a result, under some scenarios that could have arisen between 1991 and 1997, some fuel in the reactor core could have overheated, reducing the safety margin necessary to prevent fuel damage. These conditions did not arise, however.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that NRC has made a final determination that violations did occur or that enforcement action, such as a monetary fine, will be taken. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the apparent violations, their causes and safety significance, and to provide Public Power Supply officials with an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report and present corrective actions that have been taken.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated

enforcement action will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later date.

##