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**NRC STAFF ISSUES CONFIRMATORY ORDER TO SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT
REQUIRING IMPROVEMENTS TO EMPLOYEE CONCERNS PROGRAM**

The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Order to the STP Nuclear Operating Company confirming its agreement to improve the handling of safety concerns brought to management by workers. The South Texas Project nuclear generating station is located near Bay City, Texas.

The order, signed by Ashok A. Thadani, NRC's Deputy Executive Director for Regulatory Effectiveness, confirms the licensee's agreement to:

- 1) Use an independent contractor to periodically survey its employees, supervisors, management and contractors about their concerns regarding a safety-conscious work environment through 2002 and report the results of each survey to the NRC.
- 2) Conduct annual ratings of supervisors and managers by employees.
- 3) Establish a mandatory training program for all supervisors and managers designed to reinforce the importance of maintaining a safety-conscious work environment and of assisting managers and supervisors in dealing with conflicts in the work place regarding these issues.
- 4) Notify all of its employees and project contractors in writing of the details of the NRC confirmatory order and inform them of their rights to raise safety concerns to the NRC and their management without fear of retaliation.

The order was issued following findings by the NRC Office of Investigations that the company had violated federal law by subjecting four employees to a hostile work environment created by a former manager after the employees raised safety concerns. The manager involved left the company in mid-1996.

Enforcement action by the NRC is being waived because the licensee settled the employees' complaint prior to an evidentiary hearing before, and prior to a finding by the U.S. Department of Labor that the four employees had suffered discrimination.

NRC also waived enforcement action because STP Nuclear Operating Company took what NRC regarded as particularly good corrective actions and designed a comprehensive program for promoting a safety-conscious work environment. NRC also believes the licensee's overall sustained performance in the area of employee protection has been good.

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