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I-97-29

March 26, 1997

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIOLATIONS OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT BEAVER VALLEY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has cited Duquesne Light Company, the operator of the Beaver Valley nuclear power plant, in Shippingport, Pa., for three violations of agency requirements involving mispositioned valves and other components. However, no fines are being levied against the company because of its identification of the violations and prompt corrective actions.

At a predecisional enforcement conference on March 7, NRC and Beaver Valley staff discussed the infractions, which were identified during inspections conducted at the plant between December 22, 1996, and February 8. The violations are as follows:

- A failure by plant staff, on numerous occasions, to follow procedures and implement appropriate work practices and controls, leading to the incorrect positioning of numerous valves and switches.

- Operators inadvertently de-energizing the waste gas decay tank oxygen analyzers, as well as a failure to monitor oxygen concentration when running the degassifier connected to the waste gas decay tank. The oxygen concentration must be monitored to determine whether an explosive gas mixture is present.

- Despite the identification of numerous plant configuration control deficiencies in 1995, a failure to take appropriate action to make sure such problems were adequately corrected.

In a letter to Duquesne Light, NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller stressed the importance of ensuring valves and components are in the proper position. "The violations also reveal the need for greater technical inquisitiveness among your staff and the need for greater sensitivity to maintaining configuration control and promptly identifying and correcting (problems) when such control is not maintained," Mr. Miller said.

While no fines are being levied in light of the plant operator's identification and correction of the violations, similar findings in the future could result in additional enforcement action, the NRC has informed the utility.

Duquesne Light has taken steps aimed at avoiding any recurrences of the problems, including regular reviews of all

valves for proper positioning and the immobilization of certain valves.

Said Mr. Miller: "Important in this regard are steps you have taken to strengthen station corrective action processes to address broader performance issues. These actions include establishing a lower threshold for identifying and documenting problems, strengthening self-assessment efforts, and increasing management involvement in verifying effectiveness of corrective actions."

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