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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC, STROH BREWERY COMPANY TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS
INVOLVING PENNSYLVANIA PLANT'S HANDLING OF NUCLEAR GAUGES

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of the Stroh Brewery Company on Wednesday, November 12, to discuss apparent violations of agency requirements involving the firm's Fogelsville, Pa., plant.

The predecisional enforcement conference will begin at 10 a.m. in the Division of Nuclear Materials Safety conference room at the NRC Region 1 office in King of Prussia, Pa. It will be open to the public for observation.

The apparent infractions include the unauthorized disposal of generally licensed radioactive material and a failure to perform required leak tests of the material from 1981 to 1997.

Specifically, the radioactive material, americium-241, was contained in fill-level gauges used at the brewery. The gauges are used to check the level of beer in cans, bottles and kegs.

On July 28, the plant disposed of one of the gauges, holding 100 millicuries of the material, by transferring it to a recycling firm that was not licensed to accept it. The scrap metal hauler, in turn, delivered the device to a recycling facility in Temple, Pa., where it was mistakenly placed into a shredder and damaged. That resulted in isolated contamination of surrounding scrap material.

The apparent violations pose no health and safety hazard to the workers or public, or to the products made in the brewery.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that the NRC has determined a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the licensee to outline its proposed corrective action.

No decision on the apparent violations will be made at this conference. That decision will be made by NRC officials at a later time.