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NRC DEMANDS INFORMATION FROM FIRST ENERGY REGARDING DAVIS-BESSE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Demand for Information (DFI) to FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company (FENOC), regarding a new technical analysis of the corrosion event at the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant in Ohio.

The analysis, performed by a FENOC contractor and referred to as the "Exponent Report," suggests the corrosion, which severely weakened the Davis-Besse reactor vessel's head in 2002, occurred much faster than previous analyses determined. The Exponent Report and related documents touch on important safety issues and prior NRC enforcement actions. The agency is therefore asking FENOC several questions, including:

- Why were there delays in bringing the Report to the NRC's attention?
- How did FENOC consider operational experience and physical evidence gathered prior to discovery of the Davis-Besse corrosion before sending the NRC a letter on May 2 accepting the Exponent Report's assumptions and conclusions?
- How does another report, concerning Davis-Besse's performance relating to the corrosion event, affect FENOC's responses to the NRC Notice of Violation and Proposed Imposition of Civil Penalties dated April 21, 2005?

A DFI is meant to generate information, provided under oath by a licensee, to help the NRC determine whether it needs to take further action, up to revising, suspending or revoking existing operating licenses. FENOC has 30 days to respond to the DFI. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission expects to meet publicly with FENOC after the company's response has been reviewed. The NRC is coordinating its activities with the Department of Justice, given an ongoing criminal case in this matter.

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