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NRC Issues Confirmatory Order to Summer Nuclear Power Plant; Prohibits Former Contract Employee from NRC-Licensed Activities for Five Years

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a confirmatory order to South Carolina Electric & Gas Co.'s Summer nuclear power plant. The company has agreed to a series of corrective actions related to its allowing access to an individual who had deliberately concealed information in order to obtain employment at the site. The Summer plant is located near Jenkinsville, S.C., 26 miles northwest of Columbia.

The order stems from a settlement achieved under the NRC's Alternative Dispute Resolution process, which was requested by SCE&G to address two apparent violations related to the 2010 event. Those violations involved the actions of a former contract employee who falsified a personnel history questionnaire and provided a fictitious court document. After the company discovered the fabrications in early 2011, SCE&G promptly terminated the individual's employment and took a number of immediate steps to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

The NRC's ADR process refers to mediation facilitated by a neutral third party with no decision-making authority who assists the NRC and a licensee in reaching an agreement when there are differences regarding an enforcement action.

A mediation session between the NRC staff and SCE&G was held on Oct. 8 and a settlement was reached. A confirmatory order, issued on March 10, outlines the corrective actions and steps SCE&G has taken and agreed to take to address the violations.

Corrective actions already taken include a detailed analysis of the event and subsequent review of the company's site access process, sharing of the information within the company and throughout the nuclear industry, requiring official authentication of all criminal history judicial records, and program improvements such as independent reviews of information, enhanced training and periodic assessments. Under the order, SCE&G has committed to other actions including further industry-wide discussion of the event and additional training.

In addition to the actions taken by the company and outlined in the order, the NRC issued an order to the former contract employee prohibiting him from engaging in all NRC-licensed activities for five years.

“Most of the actions were completed by the company well before the ADR session and their prompt and comprehensive nature means we believe our concerns can be resolved through this order and no additional enforcement actions are needed,” said NRC Region II Regional Administrator Victor McCree. “The steps they have taken and plan to implement give us confidence that a similar event is very unlikely.”