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NRC Issues Confirmatory Order to Monticello Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Order to the Monticello nuclear power plant. The company has agreed to a series of actions related to an event where specialized examinations were not performed properly on six spent fuel canisters. Monticello is operated by Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota, and is located in Monticello, Minn., approximately 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis.

The confirmatory order is a result of the NRC's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process, which was requested by the company to address three apparent violations related to the improper testing of the canisters in 2013. The NRC senior resident inspector identified the issue when he observed two contractors fail to properly perform liquid penetrant examinations on the welds of the canisters. The NRC conducted a follow-up investigation into the event, which determined that the testing examinations were falsely recorded and the plant failed to have effective quality controls in place to monitor the contractor work. The investigation also found the deliberate actions of the contractors caused the plant to be in violation of NRC requirements regarding the welds.

The NRC has found no immediate safety concerns with the canisters. However, as a result of the ADR meeting the company has agreed to take a number of actions to regain compliance with agency regulations. Some of the commitments for the company include: ensuring the canisters are brought into compliance; submitting a plan to return to compliance and provide updates on progress; ensuring procedures require direct oversight of the testing performed by contractors; and making a presentation on the facts and lessons learned at an industry forum so that others may receive the information.

The company has agreed to address these issues according to the timelines established in the Confirmatory Order and to send the NRC a letter documenting completion of the actions when they are done.

The ADR process involves 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.

The NRC's Confirmatory Order will be made publically available through the [Agency Documents Access and Management System](#) (ADAMS) at the NRC website.