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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC STAFF TO HOLD OPEN PREDECISIONAL
ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE MAY 10 WITH WOLF CREEK

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a predecisional enforcement conference with officials of Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp. May 10 at 9 a.m. at NRC Region IV headquarters in Arlington, Tex. to discuss apparent violations arising from the January 30-31 "frazil ice" incident at Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station near Burlington, Kan.

During a period of severe cold the unusual icing phenomena known as "frazil ice" blocked the intakes of Wolf Creek's cooling water systems and threatened to cut off cooling to essential plant components. The conference will be open to public observation, but participation will be limited to NRC and Wolf Creek officials.

Scheduled to be discussed at the conference are apparent violations found by an NRC inspection conducted March 18-25. The inspection identified ten apparent violations that are being considered for escalated enforcement. These violations involve the root causes behind the icing of the essential service water system, root causes for the failure of the turbine driven auxiliary feedwater pump to function properly, failure to have required procedures in the control room, and the failure to conduct a timely cooldown to Mode 4 in accordance with technical specifications.

The decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean the NRC has made a final determination that violations 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 an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a civil penalty, will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later time.

The forthcoming conference with Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp. will be open to the public as part of a trial program to open some of these sessions for public observation.

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