



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

July 23, 1985

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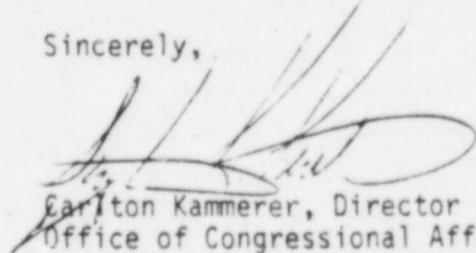
The Honorable Edward J. Markey, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed for your information is an announcement that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$150,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for allegedly violating NRC requirements concerning reactor vessel water level instruments at the Browns Ferry nuclear plant.

This announcement will be mailed to the news media today.

Sincerely,



Carlton Kammerer, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Rep. Carlos Moorhead

IDENTICAL LETTER SENT TO:
Sen. Simpson/cc: Sen. Hart
Rep. Udall/cc: Rep. Lujan
Sen. Denton
Sen. Heflin
Rep. Flippo

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Office of Public Affairs
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Monday, July 22, 1985)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE TVA \$150,000 FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS AT BROWNS FERRY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$150,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for allegedly violating NRC requirements concerning reactor vessel water level instruments at the Browns Ferry nuclear plant near Athens, Alabama.

This enforcement action relates to an incident on February 13 of this year when the NRC's resident inspector found that TVA was proceeding with the start-up of Browns Ferry Unit 3, even though the unit's water level instruments were showing significantly different readings. The inspection also found that TVA encountered a similar water level instrument problem on November 20, 1984, but did not determine the cause and did not correct the conditions. (Operators use water level indicators to assure that there is sufficient water at all times in the reactor vessel for adequate core cooling. Although NRC's inspection confirmed that instrument readings showed significant discrepancies on these occasions at Browns Ferry, the actual water level remained several feet above the core.)

In a letter informing TVA of the civil penalty, Dr. J. Nelson Grace, NRC Regional Administrator in Atlanta, said the repeated violations "represent a significant breakdown in your management system which resulted in the plant being operated for a sustained period of time in a significantly degraded condition with water level instrumentation inoperability neither questioned nor recognized."

Dr. Grace said NRC is now reviewing an event report from TVA detailing its analysis of the water level instrumentation problems and proposed corrective measures. He also noted that TVA is taking significant steps to improve its general management of nuclear operations at Browns Ferry and at its other nuclear plants.

TVA has 30 days to pay the civil penalty or to protest it, in whole or in part.

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