

No. 93-105
Tel. 301-504-2240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Friday, July 30, 1993)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$75,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON
FOR INADEQUATE SAFETY REVIEW OF REDUCED FLOW IN EMERGENCY PUMPS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$75,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for violations of NRC requirements in the safety review of plant modifications at the Dresden Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located near Morris, Illinois.

In April 1992 testing by plant personnel determined that the cooling water flow in one of the plant's emergency safety systems did not meet the expected flow rate. Two pumps combined had a flow rate of 5600 gallons per minute instead of the expected flow rate of 7000 gallons per minute.

The pumps supply cooling water to a heat exchanger which would be used to remove heat from the reactor containment in the unlikely event of a major reactor accident.

An NRC inspection in December 1992 and January 1993 determined that the utility did not adequately evaluate the reduced flow.

The company was cited for making changes to the facility which reduced the cooling system flow below the original design without obtaining NRC approval and failing to adequately evaluate the changes to determine their effects on the cooling water flow.

"While changes to the [cooling] system may have occurred without adequate evaluations several years ago, the focus of this action is on the performance of your staff after identifying the degraded flow conditions in April 1992," stated John B. Martin, NRC Regional Administrator, in notifying the utility of the proposed fine.

"Your handling of this issue reflects significant weaknesses in technical support activities at Dresden. It underscores the importance of fully understanding the design of your facility. We, therefore, strongly encourage continued efforts to improve your knowledge of plant design including, among other things, the

ongoing and planned initiatives to reconstitute key design documents and parameters."

Commonwealth Edison has until August 16, 1993, to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

#