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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WESTERN COLORADO TESTING INC. FINED \$2,500
BY NRC FOR RULES VIOLATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed to fine Western Colorado Testing, Inc. (WCTI), of Grand Junction, Colo., \$2,500 for failing to obtain authorization before using radioactive materials in areas under NRC jurisdiction.

Western Colorado Testing is licensed by the State of Colorado to use moisture-density gauges containing radioactive materials in Colorado. However, an NRC inspection completed February 3 found that the company used its gauges for work in Idaho in 1996 and in Wyoming in 1995, states under NRC jurisdiction, without filing proper forms and paying required fees.

An NRC investigation, completed on January 8, produced evidence that WCTI senior managers were aware of the requirement to inform the NRC prior to work in areas of NRC's jurisdiction and that therefore the violations were willful.

In a letter to WCTI president James R. Fife, NRC Regional Administrator Ellis Merschhoff said, "The NRC considers the failure to obtain authorization to use byproduct material in areas under its jurisdiction . . . to be a matter of significant regulatory concern because it denies the NRC an opportunity to assure that the activities are conducted in compliance with NRC radiation safety requirements."

The violation has been categorized as a Severity Level III problem on the NRC's four-level classification system. Level I is the most serious violation.

WCTI has 30 days to respond to the NRC's notice of violation, during which time it may pay the penalty or file a protest. If the protest is denied the company may request a hearing.