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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST WISCONSIN PUBLIC SERVICE
FOR TESTING VIOLATIONS AT KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine against Wisconsin Public Service Corporation for violations of NRC requirements for equipment testing at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located at Kewaunee, Wisconsin.

The violations were identified in an NRC inspection in January of this year.

The utility was cited for failing to have correct testing criteria for pump flow in two safety-related systems and for failing to meet accuracy requirements for test measurement instruments. The systems are routinely tested to assure they are functioning properly and meet design requirements.

The affected equipment was in the residual heat removal system and the auxiliary feedwater system. The residual heat removal system is part of the emergency core cooling system that might be needed in the event of an accident and is also used for maintaining reactor cooling during a shutdown.

The auxiliary feedwater system is a backup system for pumping cooling water to the plant's steam generators. It, too, is required to function under certain accident conditions.

Once the violations were identified by the NRC, the utility performed additional tests and evaluations which demonstrated that the systems would have adequately functioned had they been needed in an accident situation.

The utility has also taken comprehensive corrective actions to improve its testing program.

In notifying the utility of the proposed fine, NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach noted that the utility had missed several earlier opportunities to identify and correct the violations.

He said, "Contributing causes were low priority given to the surveillance [testing] program and reliance upon preoperational and inservice test data to determine the adequacy of equipment performance, rather than determining what was really required to demonstrate acceptable performance."

Wisconsin Public Service has until August 11 to pay the fine or to protest it. If it protests the fine and it is subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

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