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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC PROPOSES \$110,000 CIVIL PENALTY AGAINST CONSOLIDATED EDISON  
FOR VIOLATIONS AT INDIAN POINT 2 NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN NEW YORK

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed \$110,000 in fines against Consolidated Edison Company of New York for four violations of agency requirements at its Indian Point 2 nuclear power plant. All of the violations pertain to equipment not being properly maintained and/or operated at the facility, located in Buchanan, N.Y.

In addition, Consolidated Edison is being cited, but not fined, for a fifth violation pertaining to improperly set pressurizer safety valves.

The infractions for which the fines have been proposed include three relating to an inoperable reactor overpressure protection system and one for degraded performance of a safety-related pump.

In the case of the non-functioning system, the plant's overpressure protection system is used to provide pressure relief for the reactor coolant system while at low temperatures. For approximately two and a half days last June, the overpressure protection system was not working and compensatory measures were not initiated.

Because the system was inoperable and the required minimum vent area was not provided, the plant's technical specifications required that water level in the pressurizer be less than or equal to 30 percent. Despite that requirement, the level reached as high as 80 percent. Further, Consolidated Edison did not take action to place the plant in compliance until the NRC raised questions about the situation. (The pressurizer, a tank containing a mixture of steam and water, is used to regulate reactor coolant system pressure.) A \$55,000 fine has been proposed for the related violations.

The degraded pump performance condition affected one of

two recirculation pumps between September 1995 and May 1997. The pump involved, which would be needed to keep water flowing into the reactor in the event of an accident, was found to have degraded performance in 1995 and failed surveillance tests during the 1997 refueling outage.

After these tests, an examination of pump internals disclosed that a rubber hose was found wrapped around the impeller. It was determined the hose most likely had been drawn into the pump prior to or around 1989. Under certain conditions, the pump would have been unable to perform its post-accident safety function. A \$55,000 fine has been proposed for this violation.

The violation for which no fine has been proposed pertains to reactor coolant system pressurizer code safety valves' lift setpoints that were identified as being above technical specification limits.

NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller, in a letter to the utility, wrote that a "common thread" among the violations was the company's failure to identify and correct the existing adverse conditions despite several clear opportunities to do so.

"Furthermore," Mr. Miller added, "these failures involved more than one discipline, including the operations staff who did not identify the inoperable Overpressure Protection System until the NRC began questioning the matter in June 1997, as well as the engineering staff and management who did not aggressively deal with the engineer's identification of the reduced differential head for one of the recirculation pumps. The failure to identify the OPS issue occurred in June 1997, subsequent to the May 1997 civil penalty, and demonstrates that concerns remain regarding your ability to identify and correct problems."

Last May, the NRC fined Consolidated Edison \$205,000 for seven violations at Indian Point 2. Six involved a failure to identify and/or correct problems at the plant between June 1995 and March 1997, resulting in conditions the agency considered "adverse to quality." The seventh dealt with inadequate fire protection measures.

The utility has 30 days to pay the latest fine or request in writing that all or part of the penalty be withdrawn.

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