

OFFICE OF ENFORCEMENT
NOTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Licensee: South Carolina Electric & Gas Company EA-01-071
Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station
Docket No. 50-395

Subject: EXERCISE OF ENFORCEMENT DISCRETION REGARDING REACTOR
COOLANT SYSTEM PRESSURE BOUNDARY LEAK

This is to inform the Commission that the staff will exercise Enforcement Discretion per section VII.B.6 of the Enforcement Policy, Discretion for Special Circumstances, and will not issue a Notice of Violation to the Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station. A Technical Specification violation existed for having reactor coolant system pressure boundary leakage identified by a large quantity of boric acid residue on the containment floor during a containment inspection after shutdown and an apparent through-wall crack in the "A" hot leg pipe to vessel nozzle weld. This was later confirmed to be a 2-1/2 inch axial crack with a 3/16 inch diameter exit point in the weld. The licensee's root cause evaluation determined that extensive repairs to this weld during original plant construction in 1978 caused high residual tensile stresses, which contributed to primary water stress corrosion cracking. The small leak existed for several months prior to a scheduled refueling outage, exceeding the six hours allowed by Technical Specifications prior to reaching hot standby.

This violation involved equipment failure not avoidable by reasonable quality assurance measures or management controls and is considered to have resulted from matters not within the licensee's control. Based on this the staff has determined that the exercise of Enforcement Discretion is warranted in accordance with Section VII.B.6 of the Enforcement Policy. Accordingly, a Notice of Violation will not be issued. It should be noted that in accordance with the Reactor Oversight Process, no performance deficiencies or findings were identified.

It should be noted that South Carolina Electric & Gas was notified by telephone of this conclusion on March 13, 2001. The mailing of the Exercise of Enforcement Discretion is scheduled for March 14, 2001.

Contacts: D. Nelson, OE, 415-3280 R. W. Borchardt, OE, 415-2741

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