

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Region II
101 Marietta St., Suite 2900
Atlanta, GA 30323

No: II-96-99

Contacts: Ken Clark (404) 331-5503
Roger Hannah (404) 331-7878

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(December 5, 1996)

**NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST
SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY AT FARLEY**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 civil penalty against Southern Nuclear Operating Company for alleged noncompliance with federal requirements related to fire protection at the Farley nuclear power plant near Columbia, Alabama.

The violation involves three examples where the plant staff failed to assure that one-hour fire barriers, called Kaowool enclosures, were installed on electrical cables associated with systems required for the safe shutdown of the plant. While no fire occurred, the degraded fire barriers increased the vulnerability of safety-related equipment to potential fire hazard or damage.

In a letter to Southern Nuclear dated December 4, Stewart D. Ebnetter, Administrator of the NRC's Region II office in Atlanta, said that although the plant's corrective actions were ultimately comprehensive, they were not timely. Multiple discrepancies were identified over a several month period, and the plant staff did not institute the necessary positive actions to fully assess the extent of the condition until the NRC identified examples of missing Kaowool.

The company has 30 days to either pay the fine or to protest its imposition.

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