



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

February 5, 1985

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Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed for your information is an announcement that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$40,000 civil penalty against Virginia Electric and Power Company for alleged violations of NRC requirements at the company's Surry and North Anna nuclear power plants.

It is planned to mail this information to the news media today, February 5, 1985.

Sincerely,

Carlton Kammerer, Director
Office of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: Rep. Carlos Moorhead

IDENTICAL LETTER SENT TO:
Sen. Simpson/cc: Sen. Hart
Rep. Udall/cc: Rep. Lujan
Sen. Warner
Sen. Tribble
Rep. Slaughter
Rep. Sisisky

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20555

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, February 5, 1985)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$40,000 FINE AGAINST VEPCO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$40,000 civil penalty against Virginia Electric & Power Company (VEPCO) for alleged violations of NRC requirements at the company's Surry and North Anna nuclear power plants in Virginia. The fine is proposed because of VEPCO's failure to assure that the reactor vessel vent systems at both plants were operable, as required by NRC regulations.

In an October 28, 1983 letter to the NRC, VEPCO stated that reactor coolant system vents, to be used for removal of noncondensable gases which could interfere with system functions during an accident situation, had been installed at North Anna Unit 2 and could be operated remotely from the control room. During subsequent inspections at North Anna, the NRC resident inspector identified the fact that, at the time the October 28 statement was made, manual isolation valves for the reactor head vent system were closed. These valves are located inside containment and are not easily accessible to personnel during times the reactor is at power or during an accident.

The NRC said this statement was false because the reactor head vent could not have been remotely operated as the company reported and was "material" because it caused the NRC staff to believe that the reactor head vent system could have been used if an accident requiring its use had occurred. However, no civil penalty has been proposed for the false statement.

At Surry, NRC inspectors also found that the reactor vessel head vent system for Units 1 and 2 were not remotely operable following refueling outages when they should have been ready. However, the NRC said there had been no representations to the NRC by VEPCO concerning operability of the Surry systems.

In an enforcement letter to VEPCO setting forth the NRC staff position on the civil penalty, James P. O'Reilly, NRC Regional Administrator in Atlanta, said the company also provided the NRC with incorrect information concerning maintenance and testing procedures for the reactor protection system at North Anna. He said the company informed the NRC on November 4, 1983 that these procedures for the affected systems "contain the latest vendor information received by the stations." However, the NRC resident inspector at North Anna identified the fact that manufacturer-recommended lubrication procedures for the reactor trip breakers had not been incorporated into the procedures. He said the statement was material because the NRC would have

required immediate incorporation of the recommendations into the procedure had it known they were absent, and the statement was false because the procedures did not have the latest information as reported.

O'Reilly said the NRC could have proposed an additional \$40,000 civil penalty in this case but would not do so because VEPCO has had a good history of reporting information to the NRC and because VEPCO management fully recognized the errors involved with the problem and promptly initiated corrective action. O'Reilly also said both problems were associated with communications breakdowns and that the material false statements were not deliberate. He reminded the company that, while this additional civil penalty would not be proposed due to VEPCO's good record and prompt action, civil penalties for the occurrence of future similar violations could be escalated by as much as 100 percent.

The company has 30 days in which either to pay the civil penalty or to protest its imposition, in whole or in part.

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