



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

January 29, 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 \$100,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority as the result of an incident on August 14, 1984, when a safety system was overpressurized at the Browns Ferry nuclear plant.

It is planned to mail this information to the news media today, January 29, 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
Rep. Markey/cc: Rep. Marlenee
Sen. Denton
Sen. Heflin
Rep. Flippo

Rep. Lujan/cc: Rep. Myers

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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20555

No. 85-13
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, January 29, 1985)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE TVA \$100,000 FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS AT BROWNS FERRY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$100,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as the result of an incident on August 14, 1984, when a safety system was overpressurized at the Browns Ferry nuclear plant in Alabama. An NRC inspection conducted after TVA reported the incident revealed several apparent violations of NRC requirements.

The incident occurred when TVA workers were testing low-pressure core spray system valve controls while Browns Ferry Unit 1 was operating at 100 percent power. Because one valve had been improperly rebuilt during maintenance several months earlier, and because another valve was erroneously opened during the test, reactor coolant at a pressure of about 1200 pounds per square inch backflowed into the core spray system piping, which is designed for a pressure of 300 pounds per square inch. Although the low pressure system did not fail, it was heated to about 400 degrees Fahrenheit, triggering fire alarms, and the backflow blew out a core spray system pump seal. Thirteen employees received minor radioactive skin contamination.

In a letter informing TVA of the enforcement action, James P. O'Reilly, NRC Regional Administrator in Atlanta, said the event--which resulted in a loss of primary system containment integrity--was caused by "multiple operator, maintenance, and quality assurance personnel errors in several different areas." He said these violations further indicate that TVA's management improvement program established earlier at Browns Ferry "is not proceeding as expected."

NRC and TVA officials discussed the violations in an enforcement conference held on September 26, 1984, at the NRC Regional Office in Atlanta. Mr. O'Reilly said TVA addressed NRC's concerns during that meeting and has acted to correct management control shortcomings which contributed to the incident.

TVA has 30 days to pay the civil penalty or to protest it, in whole or in part.