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Region III Office of Public Affairs
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NRC TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH
COMMONWEALTH EDISON ON APPARENT VIOLATIONS
AT BYRON AND BRAIDWOOD STATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet September 11 with representatives of Commonwealth Edison Company for a predecisional enforcement conference to discuss apparent violations at the Byron and Braidwood Nuclear Power Stations.

The Byron facility is near Byron, Illinois, and the Braidwood plant is in Braidwood, Illinois. Each has two reactors.

The meeting will start at 10 a.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. It is open to public observation. NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from the news media and other interested observers.

The discussion will focus on instances at the two plants when the utility did not perform tests required by the plants' NRC licenses to determine if air or other gases had accumulated at certain points in the emergency core cooling system piping and components. This failure was originally identified by a ComEd engineer at the Braidwood plant in February of last year. However, the utility did not perform the test or seek to have its licenses amended to eliminate the testing requirement.

Following an NRC inspection in May which identified these apparent violations, ComEd said they were able to assure that there was no air in the piping by other means and performed special tests to verify that there was no gas accumulation in the piping.

Subsequently, NRC granted license amendments for Braidwood Unit 2 and Byron Unit 2. Braidwood Unit 1 and Byron Unit 1 were granted temporary relief from their license requirements to perform the tests pending submittal of a license amendment request.

The decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decisions on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a fine, will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later date.

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