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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION STAFF PROPOSES \$180,000 IN FINES
FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS AT SALEM AND HOPE CREEK PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed \$180,000 in fines against the operator of the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants, Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) Company, for three alleged violations of security requirements and one alleged violation involving harassment, intimidation and discrimination of workers at the Hancocks Bridge, N.J., facilities.

PSE&G also has been cited, but not fined, for three additional violations dealing with plant security.

The alleged security-related violations were found during NRC inspections conducted at the plants in August and September, with three stemming from a failure to control access to the protected reactor area. For those three violations, a \$100,000 fine has been proposed.

One of the violations for which a fine has been proposed was the discovery that a security force member had taped over a lock on a door to a room that contained workers' photobadge keycards. The move was apparently prompted by a problem with the lock, but the move could have allowed unauthorized individuals to enter, obtain a keycard from a security desk inside and advance to the plant's protected area.

Another violation involved a contractor being permitted to proceed to the protected area, without a required patdown search, even though the individual had set off metal detectors at the access control point three times. The NRC also determined that plant staff follow-up after the event was poor. For instance, a security supervisor, once notified of the event, began trying to locate the individual. However, the security supervisor did not notify the senior nuclear shift supervisor on site, which was required since the individual should have been considered an intruder.

The other three alleged security violations, for which no fines have been proposed, include: a failure to deactivate

photobadge keycards for individuals who no longer required site access after being terminated; a failure to complete training for security supervisors prior to assigning them to supervisory duties; and a failure to test an intrusion detection system in accordance with procedures.

In a letter to PSE&G, Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller said, "These three violations of fundamental access control requirements at nuclear power plants represent a significant degradation in the security program at the facility. . . ."

The case of alleged harassment, intimidation and discrimination, which occurred in 1993 and 1994 and was identified through an inquiry conducted by the NRC Office of Investigations, involved a former PSE&G Nuclear Safety Review Group manager. A fine of \$80,000 has been proposed.

The NRC found that the ex-manager retaliated against and harassed an on-site safety review engineer -- through negative comments in the worker's performance appraisals -- because of the engineer's involvement with a December 3, 1992, incident. On that occasion, the engineer supported two subordinates, both of them safety review engineers, who attempted to raise a safety concern.

In addition, the agency determined the former manager had discriminated against one of the safety review engineers by transferring the worker, against his will, from the Salem Safety Review Group to the Hope Creek Safety Review Group. Previously, on April 11, 1995, the NRC had issued an \$80,000 civil penalty to PSE&G for discrimination related to the December 3, 1992 event.

Miller said that although the adverse actions in this case occurred in the 1993-94 time period and under a different plant management team, the NRC wanted to emphasize the significance the NRC attaches to any finding of discrimination, as well as the importance of current management ensuring a safety-conscious environment where employees are not discouraged from voicing safety issue worries.

"Your organization has the responsibility to ensure that a work environment exists such that employees feel free to raise safety concerns," Miller wrote in a letter to PSE&G. "The actions of the former manager. . . in late 1993 and early 1994, did not adhere to these standards, and did not provide an appropriate example for management, supervisors, or staff within their line organizations, nor for the other PSE&G organizations with which they interfaced."

PSE&G has 30 days either to pay the proposed fines or to request in writing that part or all of the penalties be withdrawn.

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