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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$500,000 IN CIVIL PENALTIES  
AGAINST CRYSTAL RIVER NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a total of \$500,000 in civil penalties against Florida Power Corporation for alleged violations of NRC requirements at the Crystal River nuclear power plant near Crystal River, Florida.

Although the violations did not result in any actual impact on public health and safety, they did raise significant regulatory concerns related to ineffective management oversight and followup of operator concerns and operational activities. The NRC said the company failed to ensure that the engineering department promptly and accurately addressed operator concerns, and that the company demonstrated inadequate corrective action.

The NRC also said company managers appeared insensitive to safety concerns and did not aggressively pursue them; that engineers overlooked basic scientific principles and produced inaccurate analyses; and investigations failed to identify important case facts and underlying root causes. The violations were found during inspections and investigations stemming from events in September 1994.

NRC officials said on two occasions in September 1994, a crew of licensed operators at the Crystal River plant adjusted make-up tank pressure and level to collect technical information to determine whether an operating procedure relating to that tank was accurate. That make-up tank contains water that is pumped directly into the reactor coolant system.

The actions taken by the operators were not required by plant conditions and the operators asserted that the motivation for the unauthorized tests was to resolve a safety concern they had been pursuing for several months with plant operations management, engineering and the NRC. However, the tests were not described in the plant's Safety Analysis Report, and there was no written safety evaluation to demonstrate that the tests did not involve an unreviewed safety question. In addition, as a result of the tests, the licensee determined the facility had been operated outside its design limits.

The company has 30 days from receipt of the Notice of Violation to either pay the fine or to protest its imposition.

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