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Region III Office of Public Affairs
801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663
Angela Dauginas 630/829-9662
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

NRC ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH NORTHERN STATES POWER CO.
ON APPARENT VIOLATIONS OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT MONTICELLO STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet March 5 with representatives of Northern States Power for a predecisional enforcement conference on apparent violations at the Monticello Nuclear Power Station. The facility is in Monticello, Minnesota.

The meeting will be at 1 p.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. The meeting is open to public observation.

An NRC inspection late last year found that in November 1995 utility staff approved a reduction in the number of safety-related pumps used for containment cooling which would be needed in certain accident conditions. The company's evaluation did not, as required, address new safety questions which would result from such a change in the plant design. Specifically, the evaluation did not consider how the changes in containment temperature and pressure and heat removal capacity would affect the containment cooling system.

NRC requires that new safety questions arising from changes to a facility to be submitted to the NRC for evaluation and possible amendments to the plant's license.

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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