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

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NRC TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH CENTERIOR SERVICE CO.
ON APPARENT VIOLATIONS OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT PERRY PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet April 18 with representatives of Centerior Service Company for a predecisional enforcement conference on apparent violations at the Perry Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located 7 miles northeast of Painesville, Ohio.

The meeting will start at 9:00 a.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenton Road, Lisle, Illinois. It will be open to public observation.

Discussions will focus on instances of inadequate testing and corrective actions by Centerior Service Company. In March of last year, the utility installed an electrical circuit breaker which supplies power to safety-related ventilation systems including control room filtration which would be needed during certain accident conditions. An NRC inspection last November determined that inadequate testing of the breaker by the utility failed to detect a manufacturing wiring error, which rendered the ventilation system inoperable for a certain period of time last year.

[Note to Editors: This is the apparent violation that was scheduled for a predecisional enforcement conference on February 5 but was postponed]

In November of last year, an operator attempted to place a flow control valve back into service with a blown fuse in its circuitry. The valve unexpectedly opened and increased the reactor water flow which resulted in a power increase. NRC inspectors noted in a recent inspection that corrective actions had been previously developed by the utility for similar types of events at the plant but have been ineffective.

In 1992, NRC issued a notice reporting that a fire in the control room could cause electrical shorts that might damage some safety-related motor-operated valves in the plant. In response to the NRC's notice, Centerior Service Corporation made corrective modifications to its fuse design in 1994. However, an NRC inspection late last year discovered that the utility's initial corrective actions did not consider NRC requirements for manual operation of the valves if a fire affected automatic operation.

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 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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