

San Onofre Nuclear Hit With Violation

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A Southern California nuclear power plant violated rules by failing to get approval before eliminating 39 emergency-response jobs after the plant closed last year, government regulators said Friday.

A Nuclear Regulatory Commission report Friday said the low-level violation stemmed from changes made in the San Onofre plant's emergency plan at a time when it was shedding staff.

The twin-domed plant between Los Angeles and San Diego was shut down permanently in June. It hadn't produced electricity since January 2012, after a small radiation leak led to the discovery of extensive damage to tubing that carried radioactive water.

The report said plant managers failed to obtain required approval from the agency before making the changes. The positions that were cut ranged from engineers to chemistry and radiation technicians.

Southern California Edison, which runs the plant, said it will submit a revised plan in a few days.

"It is important to note that there are no public safety issues and the NRC determined there is reasonable assurance that San Onofre's emergency plan remained effective at all times," Tom Palmisano, Southern California Edison's chief nuclear officer, said in a statement.

After the plant closed, the company eliminated more than 1,000 positions. The changed emergency plan reflects the lower risk of possible accidents because the plant was shuttered and fuel removed from the reactors, the company said.

On Thursday, Edison, minority owner San Diego Gas & Electric Co. and consumer advocates announced an agreement that would save customers an estimated \$1.4 billion, including \$600 million in refunds, in costs tied to the shuttered plant.

Under a key piece of the proposed settlement, customers of the two utilities would not have to cover the bulk of the long-term cost for defective steam generators that were at the heart of the plant's problems, a savings of hundreds of millions of dollars. The deal must be approved by state Public Utilities Commission.

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