

gen demonstration will ensure our nuclear plants continue to help Xcel Energy provide reliable, affordable carbon-free electricity for the upper Midwest.”

According to INL, APS anticipates using hydrogen from Palo Verde to store energy for later use in reverse-operable electrolysis or for peaking gas generation when photovoltaic solar is unavailable and energy reserves are low, and possibly to support a hydrogen transportation fuel market.

“For more than 30 years, Palo Verde has been the largest single clean-air energy source in the country,” said Bob Bement, APS executive vice president and chief nuclear officer. “This pilot combines advanced technology with existing infrastructure to integrate carbon-free nuclear power with the desert Southwest’s abundant solar energy.”

■ The hydrogen production project was one of two projects under the FOA’s Advanced Reactor Development Projects pathway to be announced on September 10. The other proposal, from Blue Wave AI Labs, of Celebration, Fla., is for the development of machine learning software to improve and extend diagnostic and prognostic capabilities for predictive maintenance in nuclear plants. The work will integrate structured and unstructured historical data from about 15 boiling water reactors, collected over multiple

fuel cycles, in order to capture the complete operational and dynamic environment of plant components. DOE funding of \$5,476,400 and non-DOE funding of \$1,520,000 put a total of \$6,996,400 toward the project.

A third FOA award announced on September 10 was granted to a TerraPower-led team under the Regulatory Grant Assistance pathway to support fuel qualification. See page 68 for more information.

ENFORCEMENT

**Penalty proposed for FP&L over contractor dismissal**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$232,000 fine against Florida Power & Light and has barred Thomas Summers, former FP&L regional vice president for operations, from NRC-licensed activities for five years after an investigation found he had retaliated against a contract employee who raised a safety concern while working at the St. Lucie nuclear power plant near Jensen Beach, Fla.

According to a September 12 press release, the NRC concluded that FP&L and Framatome (formerly Areva), which was contracted by FP&L for outage work in February and March 2017, canceled an

employee’s work assignment after the individual filed a concern with St. Lucie’s corrective action program during the outage.

On March 13, 2017, a part-time Framatome employee who was serving as the lead supervisor for Framatome’s refueling team at St. Lucie submitted a condition report to express nuclear safety concerns about St. Lucie’s requirement that Framatome personnel wear multiple dosimeters while performing their work. The employee was scheduled by both FP&L and Framatome to hold the same role during an outage at FP&L’s Turkey Point plant, but on March 16 the employee’s reassignment to Turkey Point was canceled. During an investigation, the NRC found that an email and a phone call between Summers and the Framatome vice president of outage services had taken place on March 14, and that the communication had concerned the contract employee’s submitted condition report.

Together, the timing of the condition report, the email and phone communication, and the canceled work at Turkey Point were deemed by the NRC to constitute a “discriminatory act,” and the NRC stated that “neither FP&L or Framatome presented sufficient evidence to support their assertions that the adverse employment action was justified for business reasons.”

*Continued*

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