PG&E, NRC To Meet Monday
On Diablo Pipe Restraints

By Cheryle Johnson
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AVILA BEACH — It is too soon to draw conclusions with regard to the faulty placement of the seismic pipe restraint systems located in the Unit 1 containment dome of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner Victor Gilinsky said in a telephone interview Thursday.

But an aide for NRC Commissioner Peter Bradford said that a report that Bradford called the design-based error a "goof" is "probably a safe characterization" of Bradford's initial reaction he made following a preliminary briefing on the problem held for the NRC Wednesday.

The NRC staff is scheduled to meet Monday with Pacific Gas and Electric Co., owners of the plant, for a more detailed discussion on the problem.

According to Gilinsky, commissioners will be briefed sometime soon after the meeting.

He said he would reserve comment on the situation until then.

In recently voting to approve a low power test license for PG&E's $2.3 billion twin-reactor facility, both Bradford and Gilinsky issued separate, critical statements about procedural matters concerning licensing issues.

According to Bradford's aide, William Clements, Bradford voted in favor of the license because at that time the commissioner's uncertainty over whether or not PG&E should be granted a permit stemmed from "certain legal decisions and issues," and "not from any safety representations made."

Clements said Bradford Wednesday noted of PG&E's latest bedevilment that it was like making a mistake on a homework assignment:

The error has already been made, and no matter how much work one does on the problem after that, it is impossible to come up with the right answer.

The latest problems at Diablo Canyon were "made in a very long and involved process at an early stage, so that everything that flows from it is open to question and needs to be looked into," Clements added.

The discovery of the error caused PG&E to forgo its plans to begin fuel loading for low power operation last Monday.

The error was discovered because of the "intellectual curiosity" of an engineer performing some work for the Unit 2 containment dome, which is still under construction, according to PG&E spokesman Greg Pruett.

Pruett said that in analyzing a diagram showing bracing supports for piping systems, the engineer found that points in the report did not correspond with actual placement of seismic reinforcements.

Reference points for Unit 2, which is a mirror-image of the Unit 1 containment dome, had (Continued on back page)