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## Senate panel reports cover-up at nuclear plants

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WASHINGTON (AP) — A Senate panel said yesterday that it has uncovered two "silence-for-money" deals in which Texas nuclear plant workers who raised safety concerns were paid for agreeing not to testify at licensing hearings.

The Senate subcommittee on nuclear regulation is also investigating reports of at least one other secret deal between a nuclear plant contractor and an employee to determine the frequency and legality of such practices, panel sources said.

Sen. John B. Breaux, the subcommittee chairman, said that such arrangements hold frightening implications for nuclear safety.

"It turns the licensing process into a sham if witnesses can be paid money to withhold their testimony," he said.

The panel has scheduled a hearing tomorrow to hear from parties to one of the Texas agreements, and from Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Lando W. Zech Jr., who was not involved in the deals.

The commission has not commented publicly on the issue, but in private notices to nuclear plant operators last week it said that operators could not make deals with employees that in any way restrict their ability to raise safety issues with the NRC.

Subcommittee sources, speaking on condition that they not be identified further, said documents indicated that Joseph J. Macktal, a former electrical foreman at the Comanche Peak nuclear station, received \$35,000 for himself and his attorneys in a January 1987 agreement with the plant's builder, Brown & Root. They said the deal barred Mr. Macktal from testifying to the NRC regarding his concerns about unsafe plant conditions.

Subcommittee sources said that the panel has documented another case at Comanche Peak in which a worker who had raised safety concerns received \$30,000 as part of a deal with Gibbs & Hill Inc., a contractor at the plant site. They said the arrangement prohibits the employee, Lorenzo Polizzi, from testifying before the NRC about safety issues.

At Gibbs & Hill headquarters in New York, spokeswoman Debra Fay said she was not familiar with the case.

The subcommittee is also investigating a contractor-worker agreement involving the Millstone nuclear power station at Waterford, Conn., the sources said.