

NOTATION VOTE

RESPONSE SHEET

TO: Annette Vietti-Cook, Secretary

FROM: CHAIRMAN MESERVE

SUBJECT: **SECY-99-244 - LOCATION OF THE NRC'S TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER AND APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF SIMULATORS**

Approved X in part Disapproved X in part Abstain _____

Not Participating _____

COMMENTS:

See attached comments.



SIGNATURE

Feb. 23, 2000

DATE

Entered on "AS" Yes _____ No _____

Chairman Meserve's Comments on SECY-99-244

Because I believe that the Commission's decision has important implications for the agency both from an organizational standpoint and from the perspective of maintaining a high-quality training program, I have spent considerable time evaluating the options proposed by the staff in SECY-99-244. My evaluation included not only the meetings here in headquarters with the staff of the Technical Training Center (TTC) and the National Treasury Employees Union, but also a visit to the Center in December 1999 to form a first-hand impression of the facility and its staff. I was impressed by what I saw there and by the uniformly high marks accorded the TTC program by those who have taken training courses at the Chattanooga facility. I also recognize that for the TTC staff, the proposals in SECY-99-244, particularly the proposal to move the facility to Maryland, raise personal issues that merit careful consideration.

In my view, the questions of the appropriate number of simulators that should be retained as part of the NRC technical training program and the location of the TTC are linked, but can be separated. For the purpose of analysis, I have considered these two issues separately.

I find that the issue concerning the appropriate number of simulators is the easier matter to address. The advantage of eliminating the CE and B&W simulators is some long-term cost savings to the agency. I note, however, that the NRC employees who have been trained on these simulators uniformly support the quality of the training and the value of vendor-specific training in the performance of their official duties. Moreover, a decision to eliminate these simulators might diminish our capacities at facilities with CE or B&W units. I thus conclude that the NRC should retain all four simulators, although this question could and should be periodically reevaluated.

The more difficult issue is whether to keep the TTC in Chattanooga or move it to Maryland. On this question, I perceive several advantages to moving the TTC to Maryland: (1) the TTC training programs would be more accessible to the NRC headquarter's staff; (2) the TTC staff would have better access to the headquarter's program offices, which would facilitate better integration of training with new programmatic initiatives; (3) the agency would benefit from cross-utilization of the technical staff and the training staff; (4) the agency would be able to use the simulators for both incident analysis and other purposes unrelated to training, and (5) locating the training facility at headquarters could facilitate interaction among the headquarter's staff and trainees from the Regions. These are powerful considerations, in my view, particularly at a time in which our regulatory program is subject to significant modification and in which, as a result, training will be an essential ingredient to the achievement of regulatory success. I recognize that there are disadvantages in moving the TTC to Maryland—chief among them, that the TTC is functioning effectively and that the move will disrupt our valuable TTC staff. Nonetheless, after balancing the considerations, I support the staff's recommendation to move the TTC to Maryland.

It is imperative, however, that the Commission assure that the implementation of the move does not impose any needless personal burdens on the TTC staff. Moreover, the Commission should provide clear guidance to the headquarters program offices regarding Commission expectations for greater utilization of the TTC; the movement of the TTC to headquarters should be conceived as a means for strengthening our already excellent training program. Furthermore, locating the simulators at or very near the White Flint site should have very high priority in the negotiations with GSA; the benefits of the simulators will be reduced if they are not readily accessible.