

No. 91-1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Wednesday, January 2, 1991)

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has received from its Advisory

Committee on Nuclear **Waste the attached** letter that provides a program plan for the ACNW for the period January-April 1991.

Attachment:  
As Stated

December 19, 1990

The Honorable Kenneth M. Carr, Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Carr:

SUBJECT: PROGRAM PLAN FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WASTE

This is our fourth response to your memorandum of November 6, 1989, in which you requested that the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW) provide a program plan at four-month intervals. This plan covers the period January-April 1991. We hope you will find this a convenient source for anticipating our upcoming activities and for providing feedback on issues on which the Commission wishes us to focus our efforts.

In preparing this program plan, we have considered the list of specific technical issues of particular interest to the Commission, requests of individual Commissioners, the EDO's list of proposed agenda items for the ACRS and the ACNW, the NRC's Five-Year Plan, and items of particular interest and/or concern to the Committee. The priorities proposed are based on information provided by representatives of NMSS, NRR, RES, and the EDO office, as well as our own interpretation of the subject in relation to our activities as a Committee and our input into the regulatory process.

This program plan is based on the current best estimates of work output by the DOE, EPA, NRC staff, and their consultants and contractors, as well as our own estimates of how to deal with these issues effectively. In addition to the full Committee meetings noted, Working Group meetings will be held as necessary to facilitate full Committee review and action. There may be some revisions to this plan **associated with the completion of NRC staff,** applicant, and/or contractor studies and reviews as well as other schedular problems beyond our control

Full Committee meeting dates for this period are tentatively scheduled as follows:

- 27th Meeting - January 23-24, 1991
- 28th Meeting - February 20-22, 1991
- 29th Meeting - March 20-22, 1991
- 30th Meeting - April 23-24, 1991

The Committee anticipates considering the topics listed below during this four-month period.

January 23-24, 1991

The Committee will continue discussions on 10 CFR Part 60, high level waste repository subsystem performance requirements and their conformance with the EPA high-level waste standards. (High Priority)

The Committee will continue deliberations concerning the NRC and EPA regulations governing the disposal of mixed waste. Advice has been requested on the comparability of NRC and EPA requirements. (High Priority)

- The Committee will be briefed by Louisiana Energy Systems on their private uranium enrichment facility plans. Topics of particular interest include the disposal of the depleted uranium and the licensing process for the facility. This briefing is for information only. (Medium Priority)

The Committee will discuss participation by a Committee member at the Waste Management 1991 Symposium in Tucson, Arizona on February 26, 1991. (High Priority)

- The Committee intends to evaluate 10 CFR Part 61 as it relates to low-level waste disposal facilities that utilize methods other than shallow land burial. Questions to be addressed include applicability of Part 61 in its existing form to engineered facilities such as below and above ground vaults. (High Priority)
- The Committee will discuss its top three priorities for the review of nuclear waste issues and report these priorities to the Commission. (High Priority)

The Committee will discuss issues relating to human intrusion of a high-level radioactive waste disposal repository. Methods for handling this potential event in the regulatory framework will be considered. (High Priority)

February 20-22, 1991

The Committee will be briefed on the NRC HLW staff's position on penetration of the Calico Hills tuff. (High Priority)

- The Committee will discuss the information obtained during a recent ACNW Working Group Meeting on how expert judgment will be used in conducting performance evaluations in the licensing of high-level and low-level waste repositories. (High Priority)

The Committee will review and comment on an NRC Staff Technical Position regarding regulatory considerations in the design and construction of the exploratory shaft facility. (Medium Priority)

The Committee will be briefed on a technical feasibility study on the substantially complete containment concept by the NRC staff and Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses. (Medium Priority)

The Committee will discuss the information obtained during a recent ACNW Working Group Meeting on computational techniques for estimating collective population doses from exposure to low levels of ionizing radiation. (High Priority)

The Committee will be briefed on the revised 10 CFR Part 20 Standards for Protection Against Radiation." These discussions will focus on the effect these revisions will have on nuclear waste issues. (Medium Priority)

March 20-22, 1991

- The Committee will review and comment on the NRC staff's interim criteria for decommissioning. (High Priority)

The Committee will review and comment on the NRC staff's Technical Position on investigations to identify fault displacements and seismic hazards. (Medium Priority)~

The Committee will be briefed for information on the NRC staff's approach to dealing with uncertainties in implementing the EPA's high-level waste radiation protection standard 40 CFR Part 191. (Medium Priority)

- The Committee will consider the results from a recent ACNW Working Group Meeting on methodologies used to date volcanic and tectonic features on the **site of the proposed** high-level waste repository. (Tentative) (High Priority)

April 23-24. 1991

- The Committee will review and comment on an NRC Staff Technical Position on the high-level waste repository design for thermal loads. (Medium Priority)

The Committee will hear results from a Working Group on potential long-range climate change and the impact on performance assessment. (High Priority)

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- The Committee will review and comment on a proposed NRC rule on a low-level waste uniform shipping manifest. (High Priority)

The Committee will be briefed regarding decommissioning activities at specific sites such as United Nuclear Wood River Junction and AMAX West Virginia. (Medium Priority)

Unscheduled: (Will be considered as documents and time become available.)

The Committee intends to prepare a summary and critique of the high-level waste repository standards formulated by other countries. This would include standards proposed by Nordic countries, as well as those by Canada, France, the IAEA and ICRP. (High Priority)

The Committee will visit the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses in San Antonio, Texas and receive an update on the Center's activities. (High Priority)

The Committee plans to discuss the results of the NRC staff's review of the DOE/USGS "white paper" on the "Status of Data, Major Results, and Plans for Geophysical Activities, Yucca Mountain Project." This report is important as it relates to an important theme on integration of tests, studies, and existing data in the NRC staff's comments on the DOE Site Characterization Plan. (High Priority)

The Committee expects to be briefed and/or visit a proposed low-level radioactive waste disposal site and meet with appropriate state and/or local officials. (Low Priority)

The Committee will be briefed on the status of the decommissioning of the Hanford Production Reactors. (Low priority)

The Committee will hear a report by **PNL on in-place vitrification** (when possible). (Low priority)

- The Committee plans to invite a representative from AECL to discuss Canada's high-level waste standards. medium Priority)

The Committee will be briefed on the exploratory shaft alternatives study and surface-based testing prioritization study. These studies are being prepared by DOE. The Committee will review these studies when available. (High Priority)

This list represents our best estimate of the topics to be considered through April 1991. If you or your fellow Commissioners have additional items to suggest or proposed changes in priorities, please let us know.

cc: Commissioner Rogers  
Commissioner Smith  
Commissioner Kent  
Commissioner Kuntz  
Commissioner Rasmussen  
Commissioner Taylor, EDCY  
Robert M. Bernero, NMSS

Sincerely,

Dade W. Moeller  
Chairman, ACNW