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Tel. 301/504-2240

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NRC ALTERS PROCEDURES TO ALLOW UNAVOIDABLY ABSENT  
COMMISSIONER TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has modified its internal procedures to assure its ability to function is not impaired by the unavoidable absence of one or more members. The change will allow Commissioners who are, for example, on medical leave or on official travel to take part in formal Commission actions, including voting, by speakerphone. The procedural change will have no effect on the Commission's compliance with Sunshine Act procedures, or with the ability of the public to attend and observe Commission meetings.

All open Commission meetings will continue to be held in the Commissioners' Conference Room at One White Flint North, in Rockville, Maryland. The sole difference will be that one or more Commissioners whose absence is unavoidable will be able to take part in the meeting by speakerphone. The comments and votes of an absent Commissioner will be audible to all those present in the Conference Room.

In the past, a combination of circumstances has on infrequent occasions impaired the ability of the Commission to transact business in a timely manner, owing to the legal requirement of a quorum of three Commissioners. This change in procedures is designed both to avert any repetition of such problems in the future and to assure that a Commissioner's necessary absence, whether for medical leaves or for official travel, does not prevent him or her from participating in Commission meetings and decisions. The change reflects, among other things, a recognition of the increasing sophistication of communications technology.

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