Remarks by Ivan Selin, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
to the
Electronic Information Exchange Workshop

December 7, 1994

     Good afternoon. I am delighted that this Electronic
Information Exchange workshop has generated so much interest -
judging by the turnout today. I hope that you find the
information presented during the workshop to be valuable and that
the discussions will provide a boost to the cooperative nature of
this effort. Streamlining the exchange of information through
the use of new technologies, offers the benefits of faster, less
costly, and more complete communication among NRC, our licensees
and the public.

     The NRC, our licensees, and vendors are all committed to the
goal of reducing unnecessary regulatory costs. However, the NRC
must also ensure that no change in regulatory practice adversely
affects the safety of operating plants or has the unintended
effect of limiting public access to the regulatory process.
Often, due to the sheer volume of paper required for operational
plant safety, it is difficult to provide public access to all
regulatory decisions. I am therefore pleased to see that the use
of new computer and telecommunication technologies has the
potential to achieve all three of NRC's goals at the same time--
improving operational plant safety, reducing information exchange
costs, and increasing public access to regulatory decisions.

     Ensuring plant safety is, of course, our overriding mission.
It requires the analysis of large volumes of information. On a
daily basis NRC processes approximately 10,000 new pages of
regulatory information in paper form. The NRC receives about
6,000 pages from licensees and the public, with the remaining
4,000 pages being internally generated. And the volume of
information being received can only grow, as the NRC deals
increasingly with near-term issues such as waste storage and
disposal, license renewal, and the certification of advanced
reactor designs. Automating the exchange of information with the
licensees and improving public access to regulatory documents

will play a pivotal role in managing this information flow effectively. As we at the NRC have been attempting to cope with these two issues, the National Performance Review emphasized increased openness with the public, and the expansion of new computer and telecommunication technologies.

In September 1993, Vice President Gore completed the intensive six-month National Performance Review. The goal was to create a government that works better and costs less. The NPR has four main principles, two of which are especially applicable to today's workshop. One principle is to put the customer first. For the NRC, this means both the general public and the regulated community. In dealing with the public, the Commission has repeatedly stressed the critical importance of acting and making our decisions in an open atmosphere that will bolster confidence in our work. We expect that our electronic initiative will make it easier for members of the public to gain access to our materials, and to go directly to the very small portion of the material of direct interest to them.

The second principle of the National Performance Review applicable to this workshop is to reengineer government programs to cut their costs. Federal agencies are directed to reduce the reporting burden on individuals and businesses through the use of new computer and telecommunication technologies.

For the last eighteen months, the NRC has been conducting a pilot project to transmit electronically to the NRC Public Document Room, Federal Register notices of proposed and final rulemakings, Commission papers and various other NRC documents. These are being initially downloaded to floppy disks for on-site users. Over the last year, the NRC has provided to the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, computer diskettes containing Commission papers, transcripts of Commission meetings, daily plant status reports, PNOs, Staff Requirements Memoranda, and some Federal Register notices. NIRS then posts this information in their computer bulletin board, NIRSNET, which anyone with a computer and modem can access. Our next step will be to skip the diskette stage and insert the material directly onto a number of networks.

The NRC is actively pursuing projects that will ultimately lead to the automation of administrative business practices. Examples of these projects are the IRM and NRR pilot electronic information exchange plant program, the AEOD online plant information books, RegNet initiatives, and Internet access. Many of these pilot projects will be discussed during this workshop. The NRC is also pursuing projects in the areas of high performance computing and business process reengineering, although they are not the subject of this workshop. The initiatives that you will be discussing here today, as well as

the other projects NRC is pursuing, will pave the way for expanding electronic information exchanges with the licensees and increasing public access to regulatory documents.

The Commission supports and encourages the spirit of this workshop, and the fact that this is a joint effort between the Nuclear Information and Records Management Association (NIRMA) and the NRC. This workshop is timely; it is relevant; it is an example of excellent cooperation between industry and government.

I invite the nuclear industry to continue its strong support of cooperative efforts to improve regulatory processes through automation. I am also committed to improving the process of making information more accessible to the public.

Thank you. I will be glad to take any questions you may have.

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