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CERTIFIED BY:
John Barton - 3/25/99

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS
MEETING OF THE JOINT SUBCOMMITTEES ON PLANT OPERATIONS
AND ON RELIABILITY AND PROBABILISTIC RISK ASSESSMENT
MEETING MINUTES - JANUARY 26, 1999
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

INTRODUCTION

The joint ACRS Subcommittees on Plant Operations and on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment met on January 26, 1999, at 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, in Room T-2B3. The purpose of this meeting was to continue the Subcommittee's review of proposed improvements to the NRC inspection and assessment programs, including initiatives related to development of a risk-based inspection program and performance indicators.

The entire meeting was open to public attendance. Mr. Michael T. Markley was the cognizant ACRS staff engineer for this meeting. The meeting was convened at 8:30 a.m. and adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

ATTENDEES

ACRS Members

J. Barton, Chairman	D. Powers, Member
G. Apostolakis, Co-Chairman	R. Seale, Member
M. Bonaca, Member	W. Shack, Member
M. Fontana, Member	G. Wallis, Member
T. Kress, Member	R. Uhrig, Member
D. Miller, Member	M. Markley, ACRS Staff

Principal NRC Speakers

P. Baranowsky, RES*
M. Cunningham, RES
F. Gillespie, NRR*
M. Johnson, NRR
B. Mallett, RII* (via videoconference)

RES	Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
NRR	Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
RII	NRC Region II

Principal Industry Speakers

None

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There were approximately 7 members of the public in attendance at this meeting. A complete list of attendees is in the ACRS Office File, and will be made available upon request. The presentation slides and handouts used during the meeting are attached to the office copy of these minutes.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Barton, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Plant Operations convened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. He introduced Dr. Apostolakis as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment and other Members of the joint Subcommittee in attendance. He stated that the purpose of this meeting was to continue the Subcommittee's review of proposed improvements to the NRC inspection and assessment programs, including initiatives related to development of a risk-based inspection program and performance indicators (PIs).

Mr. Barton stated that the Subcommittee had received no written comments or requests for time to make oral statements from members of the public.

NRC STAFF PRESENTATION

Mr. Frank Gillespie, NRR, led the discussions for the NRC staff. Messrs. Michael Johnson, NRR, Patrick Baranowsky, RES, and Bruce Mallett, NRC Region II, provided supporting discussion. The staff discussed the issues in Commission paper SECY-99-007, "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements," dated January 8, 1999. The staff prepared presentation slides for this briefing; however, they were only used in a limited way as the majority of the time was spent in responding to Subcommittee comments and questions. Significant points made during the presentation include:

- A baseline inspection program will be performed at all sites. The staff will evaluate performance to determine when enhanced diagnosis of licensee performance is warranted.
- PIs and risk-informed inspection results will be used to measure licensee performance with appropriate thresholds for regulatory action.
- An assessment matrix will be utilized to provide for consistency in considering possible regulatory actions (i.e., action matrix).
- Policy issues include:
 - evaluation of the interface with 10 CFR Part 50 with regard to the use of risk insights,
 - evaluation of event response to ensure that adverse performance is not masked by the assessment process (i.e., assessment process and performance indicators),

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- assessment of resident inspector staffing criteria of N+1, where the onsite staffing of resident inspectors at each site is one inspector for each reactor unit (N) plus one additional inspector, and
 - evaluation of the organizational impact including proposed changes both in headquarters and in the regional offices.
- The staff's schedule includes plans for conducting two pilots in each region to test the proposed changes including:
 - coordination with industry representatives, collection and bench marking of PI data,
 - implementation of risk-informed matrices and the baseline inspection program,
 - use of performance thresholds and the assessment program action matrix, and
 - associated improvements to enforcement programs.
 - The staff is preparing a supplemental Commission paper to better address issues related to the use of PIs, enforcement, and goals and objectives for the pilots.

SUBCOMMITTEE COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the joint Subcommittees offered the following questions/comments:

Dr. Powers questioned why a full-year pilot was not proposed. The staff stated that the proposed 6-month pilot was based getting through the process on an expedited schedule in less than a year (including changes resulting from the pilots).

Dr. Apostolkais questioned the objectives of the oversight process. In particular, he questioned the distinction between an "oversight program" and a "regulated activity or process." The staff stated that the oversight process was intended to serve as a problem identification program. The staff added that diagnostic evaluations and regulatory actions would be considered based on the evaluation of corrective actions associated with observed problems.

Dr. Apostolakis questioned the use of performance thresholds (e.g., initiating events) and suggested that they may be abused to regulate licensees where no basis currently exists. The staff reiterated that the thresholds were to be used to highlight the need for closer regulatory scrutiny and may or may not result in regulatory action. The staff noted that these thresholds could be considered "bands" for regulatory action/attention. The staff further stated that the industry believes these thresholds are reasonably achievable. Mr. Barton agreed.

Drs. Powers and Apostolakis questioned how the staff picked the inspectable areas. The staff stated that some areas were picked based on risk insights using the Individual Plant Examinations (IPEs) but acknowledged that most were selected based on field experience of the inspection staff. The staff added that inspectable areas were also selected based on the lack of performance indicators for certain areas (e.g., engineering, fire protection, etc.).

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Dr. Seale questioned how the staff would ensure consistent implementation across the four regions. The staff stated that they would be performing pilots at two plants in each region. The staff stated that a Task Force had been formed to oversee the pilots and noted that a member of this Task Force was an expert in organizational management.

STAFF AND INDUSTRY COMMITMENTS

Mr. Barton requested that the staff consider adding a master acronym list to SECY-99-007 to clarify terminology and its use within the subject document. The staff agreed to consider this recommendation.

SUBCOMMITTEE DECISIONS

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Barton informed the staff that no formal presentation was necessary at the February 3-6, 1999 ACRS meeting. He requested the staff be prepared to answer Member questions related to the issues discussed during the Subcommittee and the policy issues under consideration by the Commission.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

None.

BACKGROUND MATERIALS PROVIDED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE PRIOR TO THIS MEETING

1. Subcommittee agenda.
2. Subcommittee status report.
3. Memorandum dated January 8, 1999, from P. Boehnert, ACRS Staff, to ACRS Members, Subject: Draft Commission Paper: "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements."
4. Memorandum dated December 16, 1999, from R.L. Seale, Chairman, ACRS, to William D. Travers, EDO, Subject: Proposed Improvements to the NRC Inspection and Assessment Programs - Interim Report."
5. SECY-99-007, dated January 8, 1999, from William D. Travers, EDO, to The Commissioners, Subject: "Recommendations for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements."
6. Staff Requirements Memorandum dated November 19, 1998, Subject: Briefing on Reactor Oversight Process Improvements.
7. Staff Requirements Memorandum dated June 30, 1998, Subject: Status of the Integrated Review of the NRC Assessment Process for Operating Reactors.

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Note: Additional details of this meeting can be obtained from a transcript of this meeting available in the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 634-3274, or can be purchased from Ann Riley & Associates, Ltd., (Court Reporters) 1025 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1014, Washington, D.C 20036, (202) 842-0034.