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March 24, 2000
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Secretary - U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555
Attn.: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff

Subject: Comments on Draft NMSS Decommissioning
Program Standard Review Plans

This letter submits Detroit Edison's comments on the draft NMSS Decommissioning Program Standard Review Plans (SRPs). Many of our concerns were addressed at the public meeting on the SRPs. The comments contained in this letter are the ones considered the most significant.

It is difficult to formulate comments when it is unknown which portions of the SRPs will apply to which licensees. In the future, we highly encourage you to publish such guidance at the same time as the technical documents being made available for comment. It was not clear until the public meeting whether the SRPs would apply at all to power reactors. The subsequent March 1, 2000 Federal Register explained that Regulatory Guide DG-4006 would be incorporated into the SRPs. Also, without Appendix C available for review, it is difficult to review the SRP sections which refer to Appendix C. We sincerely hope the NMSS Decommissioning Handbook and the guidance for which portions of the SRP apply to power reactors, whether it be DG-4006 or the handbook, be available for comment for feedback, even if concurrently with initial uses.

First, some general comments will be addressed and then specific comments on individual SRPs. In general, we feel it is in our, the public's, and the NRC's best interest for the regulatory approach to decommissioning and license termination to be efficient, effective, and understandable.

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Very little of the SRP guidance should apply to licensees possessing only sealed sources. Typically, no decommissioning plan should be required. If there have been no occurrences of source leakage, a letter documenting that the source(s) is no longer in the possession of the licensee and its disposition should be sufficient to terminate the license. If there have been occurrences of leakage, the submittal should also document the cleanup and survey results that demonstrate completion of the cleanup.

For power reactors, both a Post Shutdown Decommissioning Activities Report (PSDAR) and License Termination Plan (LTP) are now required by rule. The majority of the material covered by the SRPs belongs in the LTP. However, information already submitted and reviewed as part of plant licensing, plant operations or earlier decommissioning activities should not need to be resubmitted and re-reviewed. Examples include site hydrology, geology, and nearby population information, unless there is some aspect that is only important to decommissioning based on the decommissioning alternative selected. A new Quality Assurance Program should not need to be submitted. The program already required and existing ought to be sufficient.

The SRPs are extremely detailed. We understand they were written for the most complex decommissioning the NRC staff could imagine. We were pleased that the Introduction to the SRP states "the staff should use the approach outlined in this SRP in a manner that allows for flexibility". We endorse that statement and hope staff users' training will include the need for flexibility. There is much in the SRPs that will not be needed for many licensees to demonstrate the adequacy of their decommissioning approach and activities.

A general editorial comment is that the NRC should compare the suggested format section of each SRP section with the information requested section. In some cases they do not seem to correlate.

Section 1.0, Executive Summary – Comments

The information on derived concentration guidelines (DCGLs) discussed in Section 1.0 as belonging in the executive summary of a decommissioning plan is too much level of detail for an executive summary. The DCGLs, their method of selection, and corresponding dose better belong in the sections on dose modeling and facility radiation surveys.

Section 2.0, Facility Operating History – Comments

Section 2.4's definition of a spill includes controlled releases of radioactive material. We strongly disagree with calling planned discharges and releases spills. Spills should only include uncontrolled releases or spread of contamination.

Section 3.0, Facility Description – Comments

The amount of information requested on hydrology, meteorology, climatology, and seismology appears excessive. Adding the estimated length of each subsection of Section 3.0 together, results in an estimated length not to exceed 77 pages. The information seems more geared to siting a waste repository than decommissioning and terminating the license of a facility. The term “metrology” is used incorrectly throughout Section 3.4 instead of “meteorology”. “Metrology” refers to weights and measures. Also, a thorough editorial review of this section is warranted since there are a number of editorial errors.

Section 4.0, Radiological Status of Facility – Comments

Too much detail is expected. There should be no need for the maximum and average radiation levels at the surface of each piece of equipment to be listed. This is especially true if much of the equipment will be removed during decommissioning. In some cases, it would not be ALARA to perform the surveys to obtain this level of detail. It definitely would be unnecessarily burdensome to supply this information for each of the thousands of pieces of equipment at a typical power plant. A summary of ranges or groupings of radiation surveys results for plant equipment surveyed would be more realistic to expect.

Section 5.0, Dose Modeling Evaluations – Comments

This was difficult to review without Sections 5.3 and 5.4, and the appendix on dose modeling. Also, the figures would not print out using our computer system.

The section should address use of RESRAD and RESRAD-Build codes as alternatives to D and D code. The criteria for using D and D code pertaining to the removable fraction of the residual radioactivity being 10% or less if the total dose or residual radioactivity is greater than 10% of the limit, should apply at completion of decommissioning, not at the time of decommissioning.

Section 6.0, Alternatives Considered and Rationale for Chosen Alternative – Comments

Section 6.1 states the purpose of the review is to ensure the environmentally superior alternative is proposed by the licensee. This should not be the purpose of the review. 10 CFR 51.45 and Section 6.2 of the SRP require evaluation of the environmentally superior alternative, but not that it be selected. Based on the definition provided in this SRP of environmentally superior, ALARA is not a consideration, yet ALARA is a requirement in 10 CFR 20 and covered in Section 7.0 of this SRP.

Section 7.0, ALARA Analysis – Comments

This section implies an ALARA goal is chosen to be the decommissioning goal that is below the dose limit and then the decommissioning is performed to meet the ALARA goal. ALARA should be a performance based evaluation. The decommissioning plan or LTP should discuss the method for performing ALARA reviews for specific activities. For different activities, the ALARA goal will be different.

We agree with the NRC's proposal that if remediation is performed to the conservative generic screening levels, there should be no need to demonstrate the levels are ALARA. This is due to the conservatism built into the screening levels.

However, we are concerned that the SRP states that licensees or responsible parties should remediate their facility below these levels through practices such as good housekeeping. How this good housekeeping criteria is interpreted, and several different interpretations were discussed in the public meeting, could lead to unnecessary expenditures. We recommend this criteria be deleted.

Section 8.0, Planned Decommissioning Activities – Comments

Some of the detail discussed in this section may change over time, as experience is gained, or employees leave. Examples include specific methods, procedures, and techniques to be used and which activities will be performed by licensee staff or contractors. Either very little detail should be provided, or a simple method of modifying such detail needs to be developed, or both. As experience is gained on effectiveness of various methods at the facility or new equipment is available, it is likely some methods and techniques will change.

Section 9.0, Project Management and Organization – Comments

There is excessive detail contained in this section. This section should not apply to power reactor licensees or other licensees who already have NRC reviewed administrative requirements in a Safety Analysis Report, Quality Assurance (QA) Program, or similar document. We are concerned with the use of the term "procedure" in this section. "Instructions" may be a better word. If a procedure is required, then other existing requirements that are in QA Programs and Technical Specifications apply, which don't seem appropriate in the context the term is used. An example use is "procedures in the RWP" (Radiation Work Permit). They shouldn't need the review and approval requirements established for formal procedures in some licensees' NRC approved documents.

Section 10.0, “Health and Safety Program During Decommissioning” – Comments

This section also seems to include excessive detail. Licensees who are already required to have a radiation protection program should not need to submit additional information in a decommissioning plan, LTP, or PSDAR. The criteria on describing the specific instruments to be used, including numbers of instruments, manufacturer, ranges and set points could serve to discourage licensees from using any new or better instruments that become available. Also, respirators need to be maintained so they will function properly to protect the wearers. Specifying that they be in a like-new condition at time of issue does not appear to be cost-effective or serve any functional benefit.

Section 11.0, “Environmental Monitoring and Control Program” – Comments

Information on environmental monitoring and control should not need to be submitted for licensees who already have NRC reviewed programs on environmental monitoring and effluents, unless changes outside the bounds of what have previously been reviewed or established for changes will be involved.

Section 12.0, “Radioactive Waste Management Program” – Comments

This section is too prescriptive. It needs to be more flexible to account for use of waste processors and other volume reduction techniques. Also, some commercial contractual information is requested, which could be proprietary. It is in the public interest to have decommissioning plans, LTPs, and PSDARs available, rather than proprietary.

Section 13.0, Quality Assurance Program – Comments

For licensees that have an NRC approved QA Program, no additional QA program should be needed for decommissioning. Also, the QA program described in this SRP section is excessively detailed. For example, only the measuring and test equipment used to make decisions or collect information for record purposes should meet the criteria listed. Some requirements go beyond those needed for a QA Program for an operating large power reactor. This does not seem appropriate. Several examples are:

- QA organization will be in concurrence chain regarding adequacy of corrective actions for conditions adverse to quality.
- QA organization will verify proper implementation of corrective actions for conditions adverse to quality.
- Corrective action to preclude repetition will be taken for conditions adverse to quality (for Part 50 licensees, this is required for **significant** conditions adverse to quality).

Section 13.0, Quality Assurance Program – Comments (Continued)

- Persons performing self-assessment activities are not to have direct responsibilities in the area they are assessing (Note: If this is referring to audits vs. self-assessments, then this criteria is appropriate but self-assessments typically involve the line organization assessing themselves).
- Two-hour rated file containers are needed for records rendering obsolete the one-hour rated file containers currently allowed for temporary storage at operating reactors.

Section 14.0, Facility Radiation Surveys – Comments

Some criteria in this section also appear too prescriptive, especially since it may not be ALARA to perform detailed surveys before decommissioning starts in some areas, and places underneath or behind equipment may be inaccessible. The decommissioning plan or LTP should contain the nuclide specific DCGL and methodology to obtain the weighted DCGLs dependent on radionuclide mix, but not the weighted DCGLs themselves. Also, the SRP should address the possibility of an incremental release process, where some buildings or areas may be released before the full site is ready for license termination.

Section 15.0, Financial Assurance – Comments

This section should not be applicable to Part 50 licensees. There are already specific requirements in Part 50 for financial assurance of decommissioning funds, periodic reporting, and spending of funds. Some of the detail in this section differs from the Part 50 decommissioning funding requirements.

Section 16.0, Restricted Use/Alternate Criteria – Comments

In general, Section 16.0 is thorough and matches or complements the rule. The section should receive a thorough editorial review. For example, footnote 2 is mentioned, but not present and either “10 CFR” or “20” was missing from references to “10 CFR 20”.

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If you have any questions, please contact Lynne S. Goodman, Director, Fermi 1 at 734-586-1205. She would be happy to further discuss any comments. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these decommissioning SRPs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynne S. Goodman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.