

June 22, 2000

Mr. Joe F. Colvin, President
and Chief Executive Officer
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Colvin:

I am responding to the May 19, 2000, letter from you, Zack Pate, and Dr. James T. Rhodes concerning the industry position on the use of manual scrams as part of the revised reactor oversight process. The Commission believes that the new reactor oversight process will continue to maintain safety and enhance the agency's efficiency and effectiveness. As the staff seeks to further improve the reactor oversight process, your concerns and the concerns of other stakeholders will be considered. The staff will also work diligently to ensure that the reactor oversight process does not result in adverse unintended consequences.

With regard to your specific concern, the Commission recently directed the staff to provide feedback expeditiously on potential resolutions and schedules to address the issue of including manual scrams in the unplanned scram performance indicator. The response, which is enclosed for your information, identifies the activities necessary to develop and implement one or more new performance indicators. These activities include conducting a pilot program, providing training for NRC staff and the industry, and allowing all stakeholders to have an opportunity for input. The schedule provides for developing and preparing the new indicators in final form by the middle of July 2000, collecting and evaluating historical data by September 2000, and conducting a pilot program from October 2000 through the end of March 2001. If the new indicators prove to be an improvement over the current indicators, they could be implemented in April 2001, with the first data reported in July 2001.

Work on the new indicators has begun. At a public meeting on May 24, 2000, the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) presented an outline that described a set of indicators for the initiating events cornerstone that would address concerns of unintended consequences related to both manual scrams and unplanned power changes. NEI further developed this concept and presented it to the staff during a public meeting on June 14, 2000. The staff is currently evaluating this proposal.

Although the NRC is committed to addressing this issue on a priority basis, it is nevertheless important that the NRC staff adheres to the process for developing or changing PIs in order to ensure any changes are adequately developed, tested, and communicated to all stakeholders prior to their implementation. The Commission looks forward to the continued involvement of the industry and other stakeholders in this effort.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve

Enclosure: As stated

June 22, 2000

Mr. Zack T. Pate, Chairman
World Association of Nuclear
Operations (WANO)
700 Galleria Parkway, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

Dear Mr. Pate:

I am responding to the May 19, 2000, letter from you, Joe Colvin, and Dr. James T. Rhodes concerning the industry position on the use of manual scrams as part of the revised reactor oversight process. The Commission believes that the new reactor oversight process will continue to maintain safety and enhance the agency's efficiency and effectiveness. As the staff seeks to further improve the reactor oversight process, your concerns and the concerns of other stakeholders will be considered. The staff will also work diligently to ensure that the reactor oversight process does not result in adverse unintended consequences.

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June 22, 2000

Dr. James T. Rhodes, Chairman
President and Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Nuclear Power Operations
700 Galleria Parkway, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

Dear Dr. Rhodes:

I am responding to the May 19, 2000, letter from you, Joe Colvin, and Zack Pate concerning the industry position on the use of manual scrams as part of the revised reactor oversight process. The Commission believes that the new reactor oversight process will continue to maintain safety and enhance the agency's efficiency and effectiveness. As the staff seeks to further improve the reactor oversight process, your concerns and the concerns of other stakeholders will be considered. The staff will also work diligently to ensure that the reactor oversight process does not result in adverse unintended consequences.

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