



State of New Jersey

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Robert C. Shinn, Jr.
Commissioner

July 20, 2000

Mr. Samuel J. Collins
Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Subject: U. S. NRC New Commercial Nuclear Power Plant Oversight Program

Dear Mr. Collins:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission implemented its new process for assessing nuclear power plant licensee performance in April 2000. At that time, many revisions to inspection procedures, Significance Determination Processes, and Performance Indicators occurred. The inspection procedures, SDPs, and PIs used during the pilot program were updated based on lessons learned. However, our understanding is that the oversight program is evolving and that additional changes are being made. Ongoing discussions between the Nuclear Energy Institute and the NRC concerning the new oversight program have led to additional changes.

We are not able to attend the twice-monthly meetings conducted between the NRC and the Nuclear Energy Institute. There is no notification of the issues which will be on the agenda for discussion at each meeting, and there are no minutes from these meetings posted on your website or otherwise available to us. We are not aware of a record that documents continuing changes to the oversight program. We would like to receive current information so that we can stay involved in the development of the program.

What mechanism exists for us to participate in the process? Is there a document that would describe the current status of the program? What are the open issues under consideration between the NRC and the Nuclear Energy Institute? Specifically, I would like to request the following information:

1. Changes to the NEI guidance for Performance Indicators, including those agreed upon between the NRC and NEI and changes being contemplated.

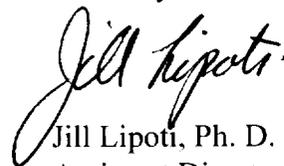
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2. Changes to performance indicators based on the white paper developed by the Office of Research.
3. Changes to inspection procedures that are not yet included in formal revisions to the procedures shown on the NRC web site and any changes to the inspection procedures being considered by the NRC or NEI.
4. Current and projected inspection hours, including the estimated time for routine inspections as well as the time estimated for special inspections. Any changes to the criteria for determining when a special inspection would be warranted.
5. Inspector's feedback from adhering to the new inspection procedures. Were they able to reach a conclusion in the estimated time for the inspection? Were they prevented from pursuing a concern due to time constraints or the fact that their concern did not contribute significantly to the overall risk at the plant? Were they satisfied that they had adequately assessed plant safety through the inspection process? Were they allowed to follow-up on their findings? Were there any repeat findings from inspections conducted 6 months ago and were all corrective actions pursued?
6. New significance determination process not shown on the NRC web site and changes to any significance determination processes under consideration.
7. Any documentation produced as a result of the twice-monthly meetings between the NRC and the Nuclear Energy Institute, as well as the agenda for each scheduled meeting.

Please contact me at (609) 984-5636 if you have any questions. We have an annual meeting with NRC Region 1 Administrator Hub Miller scheduled for August 9, 2000, and we would like to discuss the oversight program. Our discussions will be much better informed if we are able to access the requested information.

Sincerely,



Jill Lipoti, Ph. D.
Assistant Director

c: Hub Miller, NRC Region 1 Administrator
Paul Lohaus, Director, NRC OST
Kent Tosch, NJ DEP
Dennis Zannoni, NJ DEP
Robert Bores, NRC Region I