

IN RESPONSE, PLEASE
REFER TO: M931029

November 15, 1993

MEMORANDUM TO: James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

John T. Larkins
Executive Director for ACRS/ACNW

FROM: Samuel J. Chilk, Secretary /s/

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - BRIEFING ON STATUS OF
THERMO-LAG, 10:00 A.M., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29,
1993, COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE
WHITE FLINT NORTH, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND (OPEN
TO PUBLIC ATTENDANCE)

The Commission was briefed by the NRC staff on the status of the actions to resolve the Thermo-Lag fire barrier issues. The staff has done a good job in oversight of the industry to assess and evaluate testing. However, the Commission is concerned with whether the current program will lead to timely resolution of the fire barrier issue. The Commission is concerned that even if technical agreement is reached between the staff and NUMARC and the testing can be completed, the test results may not necessarily assure a solution to the Thermo-Lag fire barrier issue. The Commission requests that the NRC staff perform the following tasks:

- 1) Have the ACRS review the technical differences that remain between NUMARC and the staff on the NUMARC test program. The Commission would appreciate the ACRS's views on this issue.
- 2) Inform the Commission of the proposed course of action for resolving the methodology and criteria differences especially with respect to the following issues:
 - (a) the degree of conservatism or margin provided by testing without cables in the trays as compared to testing with cables in the trays,
 - (b) the difference in measured temperature with thermocouples located as proposed by NUMARC compared with staff's placement. Illustrations of these situations would be useful, and
 - (c) information necessary to extrapolate data from

simple, reference tests to actual as-built configurations.

- 3) Encourage NUMARC to complete the testing and analyze the results. The staff should promptly review the test results when available.
- 4) Consider alternatives to the current program in the event the present course of action is not sufficient to reach an acceptable solution to this issue in a reasonable amount of time.
- 5) Revise the staff's action plan to include points in the process where it would be prudent to consider implementing the alternatives and a reasonable deadline for resolving the Thermo-Lag issue.

For example, it may be possible to obtain a generic solution to the 1 hour barrier and require site specific solutions to the 3 hour barrier; alternatively, it may be possible to identify other barriers and configurations.

On this issue, the Commission wants to know the number of plants that use only 1 hour barriers and how many use 3 hour barriers. For those using 3 hour barriers, provide some measure of the extent of usage.

(EDO) (SECY Suspense: 12/15/93)

The Commission is interested in a comparison of the fire protection requirements at foreign reactors with those in the U.S. and the design (including materials) or operational measures being taken in foreign reactors with respect to this issue.

(EDO) (SECY Suspense: 1/14/94)

cc: The Chairman
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner Remick
Commissioner de Planque
OGC
OCA
OIG
Office Directors, Regions, ACRS, ACNW, ASLBP (via E-Mail)
PDR - Advance
DCS - P1-24