

Items for the Record of the May 8, 2001 hearing before
Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Wetlands, Private Property and Nuclear Safety

1. Senator Voinovich to Commission
He would like recommendations to help the human capital problems. What is working at the NRC? What do you have in place to keep people (staff)? What are we doing to bring people back and to attract new hires?
2. Senator Inhofe to Commissioner Dicus
Confirm which school has doubled its nuclear engineering students and try to find out why (what worked).
3. Senator Voinovich to Commission
Identify which schools have research reactors that are active.
4. Senator Reid to Commission
The Senator will be providing questions for the record and would like us to respond to them in two weeks.
5. Senator Inhofe to Commission
Regarding Price Anderson, provide NRC's change of position on premiums based on the new situation for license renewals (premium of \$10 M vs. \$20 M as in 1998 report) in a letter to the Subcommittee and to Senator Inhofe. They want a letter as soon as possible, this week or early next week, as they are about to introduce legislation. THIS WAS PROVIDED.
6. Senator Reid to Commission
How much money and staff resources has NRC spent since 1992 to develop its independent HLW repository radiation standard for Yucca Mt?
7. Senator Inhofe to Commission
He has heard that 20 % of our budget is for licensee-specific activities (Part 170 fees) but 80% of our budget (Part 171 annual fees) does not have adequate accounting. Please respond to the adequacy of accounting for the money we collect from fees- - as well as money from the waste fund, general fund, etc. Also, explain what percentage is from Part 170, Part 171, waste fund, general fund, etc.
8. Senator Voinovich to Commission
Part 35 issue. He understands that NRC adds to the cost of healthcare without improving safety. NRC ignored the NAS findings. For the record, he will provide specific questions that were raised by one (or more) of his constituents.

QUESTION 1. Senator Voinovich to Commission

He would like recommendations to help the human capital problems.

What is working at the NRC? What do you have in place to keep people (staff)? What are we doing to bring people back and to attract new hires?

ANSWER. (Page 19, line 25)

The staff is developing a comprehensive plan for implementing a systematic strategic workforce planning process at NRC to address core competency issues. This plan will address workforce planning issues, such as an aging workforce, potential lack of critical skills, succession planning, and the effect of external labor market trends on the availability of needed skills.

NRC has put in place a number of promising strategies to retain and attract employees. These strategies include:

- Hire employees prior to the departure of experienced, technical staff to facilitate knowledge transfer
- Increase compensation/number of higher level positions
- Increase permanent entry level interns and cooperative education students
- Provide grants for college students
- Implement student loan repayment programs
- Implement fellowship programs for employees to develop skills unique to NRC.

QUESTION 1.

- 2 -

- Grant Waivers of Dual Compensation Limitations where appropriate
- Employ retention allowances
- Continue to use recruitment bonuses
- Continue training and retraining efforts

The agency will continue to use these strategies to retain critical technical skills. We will continue to provide robust training opportunities, flexible work schedules, high quality working conditions, and employee services (e.g., up-to-date information technology tools, on-site day-care, health and fitness programs). The NRC has expanded our outreach activities, established competitive entry-level salaries, and will use recruitment bonuses, and establish fellowship programs. Through the use of these strategies, NRC, seeks to effectively address the human capital challenge.

Voinovich/HR
05/15/01

QUESTION 3. Senator Voinovich to Commission

Identify which schools have research reactors that are active.

ANSWER. (Page 19, line 25)

The following is a list of schools which have research reactors with an active operating license. The University of Illinois has an operating license but has ceased operations. The first three schools listed have publically announced their intention to shut down their research reactors in the near future. Please note that the NRC has not received formal correspondence concerning a shutdown of any of the listed facilities.

Cornell University TRIGA

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

University of Michigan

Idaho State University

Kansas State University

North Carolina State University

Ohio State University

Oregon State University

Pennsylvania State University

Purdue University

Reed College

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission

Voinovich/NRR
5/14/01

QUESTION 3.

2

Texas A&M University

University of Arizona

University of California at Irvine

University of Florida

University of Maryland

University of Massachusetts – Lowell

University of Missouri – Columbia

University of Missouri–Rolla

University of New Mexico

University of Texas

University of Utah

University of Wisconsin

Washington State University

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

University of California-Davis, McClellan

QUESTION 6. Senator Reid to Commission

How much money and staff resources has NRC spent since 1992 to develop its independent high-level waste repository radiation standard for Yucca Mountain?

ANSWER. (Page 24, line 31 and Page 25, line 10)

It is our understanding (based on the testimony transcript and discussion with your staff) that the question relates only to the development of "independent radiation release standards" or dose limits. The staff estimates that approximately 2-4 staff weeks and \$10,000 in contractor expenses were incurred in specifying the proposed radiation standard and responding to public comments regarding the radiation standard. This expenditure is small because it reflects only those costs associated with NRC's specification of an annual, individual, all-pathway dose limit of 0.25 mSv (25 mrem) and not the costs associated with development of other aspects of the NRC's regulations.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 specified the development of a Yucca Mountain-specific repository standard that would be based upon and consistent with the findings of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). The NAS released their report on the technical basis for a Yucca Mountain standard in August, 1995.

QUESTION 6.

The NRC specified a dose limit in its proposed regulation for Yucca Mountain that is generally consistent with the National Academy of Sciences report, International Commission on Radiation Protection, and NRC's dose limits for decommissioning of nuclear facilities and low-level waste disposal [i.e., annual, individual, all-pathway dose limit of 0.25 mSv (25 mrem)]. Because the dose limit was already in use in NRC regulations, limited effort was necessary for its specification in proposed 10 CFR Part 63.

Under its authority, NRC is responsible for not only implementing the EPA standard but specifying other criteria for ensuring safety of the Yucca Mountain repository (e.g., performance assessment, performance confirmation, emergency planning, and quality assurance). The total NRC resources that have been spent since release of the NAS report to develop the NRC regulations are approximately \$800,000 (including NRC staff and NRC contractor costs associated with the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses). The staff resources reported are for work directly related to developing the regulation.

QUESTION 7.

Senator Inhofe to Commission

Senator Inhofe has heard that 20% of our budget is for licensee-specific activities (Part 170 fees) but 80% of our budget (Part 171 annual fees) does not have adequate accounting. Please respond to the adequacy of accounting for the money we collect from fees—as well as money from the waste fund, general fund, etc. Also, explain what percentage is from Part 170, Part 171, waste fund, general fund.

ANSWER. (Page 28, line 14)

Approximately 7 percent of the NRC's FY 2001 budget is appropriated from the Nuclear Waste Fund and the General Fund. The remaining 93 percent of the budget is offset through fees charged to NRC licensees.

The assessment of Part 170 and Part 171 fees is nondiscretionary and in compliance with statute and case law. The agency collects approximately 25 percent of its required fee amounts from Part 170 fees for specific services. These fees recover the NRC's costs of providing special benefits to identifiable applicants and licensees. Examples of the services provided include review of applications for new licenses, the review of applications for renewal of existing licenses, the review of requests for license amendments and inspections. The remainder of the fees are collected through Part 171 fees (annual fees) to recover generic and other regulatory costs not otherwise recovered through Part 170 fees. These annual fees recover the agency's budget associated with activities such as: allegations; contested hearings; research; development of risk-informed regulations; rule development; maintaining the incident

Inhofe/CFO
5/15/01

QUESTION 7.

response center; international programs; oversight of Agreement States; and issuance of orders. NRC's basis for calculating fees are available to the public.

The agency complies with the appropriate laws, regulations and generally accepted accounting principles for its accounting operations including receivables such as fee collections. The NRC's financial records are audited annually by the NRC Inspector General. The NRC has received an unqualified financial statement audit opinion each year since FY 1994.