

June 27, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Dennis K. Rathbun, Director *IRA*
Office of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: SENATE ENERGY COMMITTEE HEARING ON PRICE-ANDERSON
ACT RENEWAL, NUCLEAR ENERGY PRODUCTION AND
EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES

On June 26, 2001, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the proposed renewal of the Price-Anderson Act. In his opening remarks, Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) noted that the Bush and Clinton Administrations supported renewing the Price-Anderson Act, as does his own energy bill (S. 597) and energy bills introduced by Senator Pete Domenici (S. 472) and Senator Frank Murkowski (S. 388). Senators Murkowski (R-AK) and Mary Landreu (D-LA) expressed their support for nuclear power and renewal of Price-Anderson in their opening statements.

As noted in my memorandum of May 24, 2001, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the Price-Anderson Act reauthorization. Written statements were taken on May 24, oral statements were not presented and no questions were asked at that time because of schedule conflicts and events surrounding Senator James Jeffords' (I-VT) decision to leave the Republican party.

A copy of the complete witness list for the June 26, 2001, hearing is attached. The only change from the May 24, 2001, hearing is the environmental witness with Mr. Erich Pica, Friends of the Earth, replacing Ms. Anna Aurilio of the National Association of State Public Interest Research Groups. A copy of Mr. Pica's testimony is attached. The written statements of the other witnesses were circulated with my May 24, 2001, memorandum. Additional copies of the testimonies are available in OCA.

All of the witnesses with the exception of Mr. Pica, support renewal of Price-Anderson. Marvin Fertel of NEI solicited support for a permanent renewal; DOE, the insurers, and the contractors said they supported longer-term renewal, but could live with a ten-year renewal as recommended by NRC. They also said that the Act should be renewed in a timely fashion with no hiatus.

In response to a question from Senator Landreu, each witness talked about their organization's involvement with nuclear waste. Mr. Gray explained that the NRC is revising its high-level waste regulations to conform with the recently issued Environmental Protection Agency standard and continuing to review and comment on Department of Energy programs and analyses to ensure NRC's readiness to accept a license application for a potential high-level waste repository. Mr. Bingaman asked whether NRC had developed a position on how to treat, for Price-Anderson purposes, multiple, small, modular reactors at a single site. Mr. Gray noted that the Commission is working on a response to the same question asked by Senator Murkowski and said that an answer would be forthcoming for the record of both hearings.

Attachments:

As stated

cc: OEDO	RES	OIG	NMSS
OGC	NRR	ACNW	SECY
OGC (Cyr)	OPA	OCFO	OCAA

Contact: Tom Combs, 415-1776