

***SUMMARY of COMMENTS BEFORE A MEETING OF THE  
UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION***

November 9, 1999

**Regarding An Integrated Review of Decommissioning Requirements  
Improving Decommissioning Regulation For Nuclear Power Plants**

A CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE by Raymond Shadis, New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution, Inc, Friends of the Coast- Opposing Nuclear Pollution

**I. Introduction**

I believe the most productive role of non-industry stakeholders, in particular informed laypersons, may be bounded by the following:

- **Help focus policy with regard to the public's need to have confidence in nuclear regulation.**
- **Help industry and regulators think through developing regulation from the perspective of affected parties (e.g., residents in the vicinity of nuclear facilities, or environmental advocates).**
- **Question assumptions and process, especially from a practical or layman's point of view.**
- **Help both industry and regulators to "think outside the box", that is, to consider those externalities which may be obscured by concentration on more narrowly focused disciplines.**
- **Share the perspective of experience and local knowledge**

***I. Enhancing Clarity, efficiency, and effectiveness***

If adapting regulations originally drafted for operating nuclear power stations has proved to be problematic for both regulators and the licensees, the disorienting effect on a public stakeholder's sense of place in the process is even more pronounced.

**Public confidence cannot be maintained if there is uncertainty from or within the agency on basic issues.**

***For example:***

- **Citizens, who were for years assured that nuclear power reactors were nonpolluting, now find there are significant issues with radiological site remediation. They find that, in terms of risk, residual radioactive pollutants are not required by NRC to meet the same derived risk-standards as non-radioactive toxins in the environment. A Commission which seeks to relieve the industry's regulatory burden (if possible) by**

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3

Comments Before a Meeting of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Raymond Shadis - November 8, 1999

**Although the staff should be planning for reviewing and risk-informing the entire decommissioning process, I believe the present priority of examining spent fuel pool accident risks to be correct.**

**The staff is correct in undertaking an in-depth review rather than simply relying on the conclusions of the few existing studies of accident risks. The staff should have accurate plant specific design information.**

**I am concerned that the move to a risk-informed decommissioning rule not become so weighted toward risk-base that analysis for prescriptive based contributions to the rule are slighted. I believe it is important to the protection of the environment, and to the public health and safety, to continually ask, "What if? It is important to examine any tenable question that is raised before dismissing it based on a casually assigned probability.**

The following scenarios are offered as examples:

- **Accidental Backflush During Piping Decontamination**
- **Kindling a Zirconium Cladding Fire**

**I do not believe an accurate risk analysis can be accomplished without a careful, updated review, both site-specific and generic, of external factors that are apt to affect assumptions about risks and consequences.**

**I am concerned about what we think we know. For example, the staff has identified no materials aging or degradation issues in examining SFP vulnerabilities. However materials used in spent fuel pools, in racks, and in fuel assemblies have been known to degrade in similar environments.**

**While focus on accidents that would trigger offsite emergency response is understandable, more likely accidents involving gross consequences to workers and accidents involving long-term damage to the environment must be given competing emphasis.**

**While the impatience of industry with what appears to a slow process is understandable from a time is money perspective, the effect on a license being required to submit individual analysis and applications for exemptions can be mitigated through preparation for the process. In other words, the industry has a readily available in-house remedy available. Individual SFP heat up and vulnerability analysis can and should be done as soon as possible and can be done well in advance of decommissioning.**

**A failure to adequately provide for the public safety, however, should an accident occur, is without remedy.**

4

Comments Before a Meeting of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Raymond Shadis - November 8, 1999