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July 9, 2001

The Honorable Joe Barton, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) intends to publish in the Federal Register for public comment, the enclosed proposed amendment to the Commission's rules in 10 CFR Part 20, "Standards for Protection Against Radiation." This proposed rule would amend the NRC's regulations relating to occupational skin dose limits.

The proposed amendment would modify the current skin dose limit applicable in cases where licensee personnel have been exposed to extremely small, usually microscopic, radioactive particles on a very small area of skin. Based on several health effects studies, the current skin dose limit is considered overly conservative. It also has negative consequences to worker efficiency and safety, by requiring frequent skin monitoring during each shift, that more than outweigh the benefits provided by the current limit. The proposed rule sets a more risk-informed dose limit that reduces unnecessary burden on licensees for reporting exposures which have insignificant health implications. This approach was recommended by the Congressionally-chartered National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements and is consistent with the regulations of the Department of Energy.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Dennis K. Rathbun, Director  
Office of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure: Federal Register Notice

cc: Representative Rick Boucher

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July 9, 2001

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands,  
Private Property and Nuclear Safety  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Dennis K. Rathbun, Director  
Office of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure: Federal Register Notice

cc: Senator George V. Voinovich

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