

monitor and reduce greenhouse gases and that it create international partnerships to monitor, measure, and mitigate emissions. He said his administration would establish the U.S. Climate Change Research Initiative to study areas of uncertainty and to identify priority areas where investments could make a difference.

--THE PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR MORE RESEARCH CONCEDES GLOBAL WARMING is a serious problem and puts him where U.S. policy was a decade ago, said Jennifer Morgan, director of the World Wildlife Fund's climate change campaign. Morgan said the call for research contradicted the administration's energy plan, which, she maintained, "would increase the carbon emissions that cause global warming." A call for research, rather than action, "is a grossly inadequate and irresponsible response to one of the most urgent environmental crises of our time," she said.

--SOUTHERN NUCLEAR PLANS TO REPLACE VENT AND DRAIN CAPS THAT FAILED to close fully on a spent fuel storage cask at Hatch yesterday. Southern Nuclear Operating Co. said the caps would be replaced with a design that should prevent the problem. According to today's NRC daily events report, the caps were stuck in the half-closed position. Southern Nuclear told NRC it was not aware of the loss of any helium, which is added to the casks to prevent clad corrosion and help conduct heat from the fuel to outside the multi-purpose canister (MPC). To permit repairs, the cask is being cooled down with water. The utility was installing pressure gauges to verify that the proper amount of helium remains in the MPC, supplied by Holtec International. The helium could be refilled, Southern Nuclear said. The utility also noted that the caps are needed for only a short period of time until a cover can be welded over the caps. Brian Gutherman, Holtec's licensing manager, said there have been no similar problems with the four Holtec MPCs that have been deployed to date, three at Hatch and one at Exelon's Dresden.

--AEP DETERMINED THAT CONTAINMENT STRUCTURES AT D.C. COOK COMPLY with design basis requirements. A group of American Electric Power (AEP) officials, led by Mike Rencheck, vice president for nuclear engineering, reported their results to NRC today, saying the licensing basis changes resulting from AEP's analysis do not require submittal of a licensing amendment. Rencheck said AEP has now met the commitments it made in an October 15 letter, in which Rencheck promised to "address a condition in which certain internal containment structural elements did not meet the design load margins as described in the plant's licensing basis, as a result of completing simplistic conservative evaluations of these structures."

--AFTER SERVING IN THE ACTING POSITION FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS, STUART REITER has been elevated to NRC's chief information officer (CIO). Reiter joined the agency in May 1999 after working as the director of infrastructure services for IMC Global Corp. He was named acting CIO in July 1999 following the retirement of the agency's first CIO, Anthony Galante. Reiter's new position becomes effective June 17. The agency also named Jacqueline Silber deputy CIO. Silber is currently the director of programs, management, policy development & analysis staff within the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. She was previously on the personal staff of former NRC chairman Shirley Jackson.

--ON CAPITOL HILL ... Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) will chair a Governmental Affairs Committee hearing June 13 on the economic effects of the restructuring of the electricity and natural gas industries. The 9:30 a.m. hearing will be in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, room 342. ... The House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Energy & Air Quality will continue its hearings this week on energy policy. The hearing will begin at 10 a.m. June 13 in the Rayburn House Office Building, room 2123. ... A House Ways & Means panel has scheduled two hearings this week on energy tax measures. The Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures has hearings scheduled for 2 p.m. on June 12 and 10 a.m. on June 13 in the Longworth House Office Building, room 1100.

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