

INFORMATION REPORT

December 31, 2001

SECY-01-0231

For: The Commissioners
From: John W. Craig, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
Subject: SECY-01-0231 WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK
ENDING DECEMBER 21, 2001

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*No input this week.

/RA/

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Assistant for Operations, OEDO

Contact:
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/RA/
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WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 21, 2001

The Weekly Information Report is compiled by the Office of the EDO and includes highlights of Headquarters and Regional Office activities.

Contact: G. Smith, OEDO by E-mail: gas@nrc.gov.

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*No input this week

Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

NRC Information Notice 2001-19: Improper Maintenance and Reassembly of Automatic Oil Bubblers dated December 17, 2001

The NRC is issuing this information notice to alert addressees to recent problems resulting from improper maintenance and reassembly of automatic oil bubblers. The NRC expects all recipients to review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, as appropriate, to avoid potential problems. However, the recommendations contained in this information notice do not constitute NRC requirements; therefore, this information notice does not require any specific actions or written response.

Reactor Oversight Process

The Inspection Program Branch (IIPB) conducted a Safety System Unavailability (SSU) planning meeting with the industry and the public on December 12-13, 2001, at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda. The meeting defined the objectives and success criteria for a pilot program for the proposed replacement unavailability performance indicators (PIs) and the new unreliability PIs. Discussions of the pilot implementation generated several open issues. For example, there were differences over what component data to use and how to use it to calculate train unreliability for the 6 monitored systems in the pilot. Industry participants prefer to count a train demand every time there is a demand on an individual component whose failure can cause a train failure, and to count a train failure every time one of those components fails. The staff would monitor demands and failures of major components and calculate train unreliability from that data. These differences affect the way train unreliability is counted and can result in significant differences. In order to reach a decision on these and other issues, the NRC/Industry working group decided to delay the start of a workshop to the end of February 2002, which may also delay the actual start of the pilot by one month to May 2002. The group will meet again on January 23- 24, 2002, to address and resolve these open issues.

IIPB provided support at the Region III Reactor Inspector Counterpart meeting on December 12-13, 2001. At this meeting IIPB made a presentation regarding Inspection Manual Chapter (IMC) 0612, "Power Reactor Inspection Reports," SDP improvement plan, feedback process improvements, and other IIPB activities.

Tritium Production Program

The NRC published Federal Register Notices of Consideration of Issuance of Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determinations, and Opportunity for Hearings for Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA's) Watts Bar (WBN) and Sequoyah (SQN) plants on December 11, 2001. The proposed amendments would change Technical Specifications to allow WBN and SQN to provide incore irradiation services for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). These amendments would permit TVA to insert up to 2304 tritium-producing burnable absorber rods (TPBARs) in the WBN reactor and up to 2256 TPBARs in the SQN reactor to support DOE in maintaining the nation's tritium inventory for national defense purposes.

December 21, 2001

ENCLOSURE A

Issuance of an Exemption for Turkey Point on Hydrogen Control Requirements

On December 12, 2001, the staff issued an exemption for Turkey Point Units 3 and 4 from the regulations related to the hydrogen recombiners and the post-accident containment vent system. The exemption removes these systems from the Turkey Point Plant design basis. In addition, the licensee requested an exemption from 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix E, Section IV related to the containment hydrogen monitors. The staff will act on this exemption request in the near future.

Florida Power and Light

On December 17, FPL Group, Inc. announced that Lew Hay, the company's President and Chief Executive Officer, has been elected to the position of Chairman effective the end of this year when Jim Broadhead, the current Chairman, retires. Mr. Broadhead has been Chairman since 1990. Mr. Hay joined the company in 1999, and served as Chief Financial Officer and then President of FPL Energy, the company's independent power production unit. He was elected President and CEO of FPL Group in June, 2001.

Palisades Plant

Palisades has been in an extended, forced outage since June 22, 2001, to repair or replace the control rod drive mechanism (CRDM) upper pressure housings after one experienced a through-wall leak and the licensee discovered that the majority of these housings were experiencing transgranular stress corrosion cracking (TGSCC) at a common butt weld joining a 4 X 8 inch eccentric reducer. Due to uncertainties regarding the ability to acquire sufficient housings for full replacements, the licensee requested, as a contingency, that the NRC staff grant a relief request to apply a certain ASME Code Case (No. N-504-1) to perform weld overlay repairs on the affected weld. Subsequently, during the weekend of December 15-16, 2001, the licensee completed replacement of all 45 CRDM upper housings, and by letter dated December 12, 2001, withdrew the prior relief request. The licensee is also replacing all of the remaining CRDM seal housings (9 were replaced during a previous outage) with seals of a new inconel design because several of the old seals have experienced TGSCC in the past. Only ten seal housings remain to be installed at this time (December 18, 2001). Other outage work nearing completion include stiffening supports for the missile shield over the reactor vessel head, design modifications to fully eliminate negative net positive suction head for the High Pressure Safety Injection and Containment Spray pumps during the post-LOCA recirculation mode, and work on the traveling screens. The licensee announced publicly this summer that it planned to complete the CRDM housing replacements this year and bring the plant back on line in early January 2002.

Fort Calhoun

Omaha Public Power District announced that Mr. Sudesh Gambhir, Division Manager - Operations/ Site Coordinator has been selected to guide the License Renewal and Steam Generator Projects. He will report directly to Mr. G. Gates, Vice President. Mr. R. Ridenoure has been promoted to the Division Manager - Operations/Site Coordinator position. Mr. R. Clemens has been promoted to Division Manager - Nuclear Assessments.

December 21, 2001

ENCLOSURE A

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Meeting to Draft a Safety Guide for Uranium Fuel Fabrication Facilities

From December 10-14, 2001, an individual from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards participated (with five other participants, who came from the United Kingdom, France, and Japan) in a working-level meeting at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in Vienna, Austria. The objective of the meeting was to prepare a draft guidance document (DG-317) that could be used: (1) for design of a new low-enriched uranium fuel fabrication facility (UFFF); and (2) for inspection by an IAEA team of the operations of an existing UFFF. A similar meeting is planned regarding mixed-oxide fuel facilities during the second quarter of calendar year 2002. Other future meetings also may be convened on developing detailed guidance concerning operations of a UFFF and on developing guidance for applying a risk-informed approach, such as an integrated safety analysis, to fuel cycle facilities.

NRC Holds Meeting of 10 CFR Part 40 Jurisdictional Working Group

On December 13, 2001, the 10 CFR Part 40 Jurisdictional Working Group held a meeting to discuss further the best approach to delineate the responsibilities of the NRC and other regulatory agencies regarding source materials with low concentrations of uranium and thorium and their decay products. The meeting was open to the public. The topics under discussion included: (1) specific information related to the results of NUREG-1717, "Systematic Radiological Assessment of Exemptions for Source and Byproduct Materials," for those materials applicable to the working group's task; (2) Part N-TENORM; (3) options discussed in SECY-99-259, "Exemption in 10 CFR Part 40 for Materials Less Than 0.05 Percent Source Material--Options and Other Issues Concerning the Control of Source Material"; and (4) jurisdictional issues. Representatives from the following agencies and organizations participated in the meeting: Organization of Agreement States; the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors (CRCPD); the Environmental Protection Agency; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Department of Energy. Additionally, the Chairman of the CRCPD Part N-TENORM working group participated in the discussion of Part N. Representatives from the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and the Office of State and Tribal Programs also participated.

Staff Support for the International Atomic Energy Agency's Radiation Events Development

From December 10-14, 2001, a staff member from the Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety attended a meeting at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on Developing the IAEA's Radiation Events (RADEV) database. RADEV, currently under development by the IAEA, is envisioned as an International events database for radiation accidents and incidents involving the use of nuclear materials, excluding power reactor operations. The IAEA invited the staff member to the meeting to provide insights during the final development and implementation of RADEV. The meeting is a follow-up to earlier meetings held in 1999 and 2000. The earlier meetings focused on: (1) the development of the data elements and data structure for RADEV; (2) the development of the format for written forms to collect data and software design; and (3) the collection and input of

data into RADEV, and the development of statistical reports. The purpose of the current meeting was to review returned questionnaires and to recommend ways to improve RADEV; review the "Users Manual" and recommend improvements and determine criteria for accepting data into RADEV; and review and recommend improvements to procedures such as quality assurance and maintenance. RADEV is similar to the NRC's Nuclear Materials Events Database. It is expected to be operational in early CY 2002.

Department of Energy Public Hearing on Yucca Mountain

On December 12, 2001, the NRC's On-site Representatives attended the Department of Energy's (DOE's) final supplemental hearing related to the potential site recommendation of the Yucca Mountain project. DOE Secretary Spencer Abraham and Undersecretary Robert Card attended this hearing in Las Vegas, Nevada. DOE representatives received comments from 43 of approximately 70 attendees. Secretary Abraham held a news briefing and responded to media questions during the latter portion of the hearing. The purpose of the added hearings was to provide the public with more opportunities to file comments on the Yucca Mountain site characterization process. The hearings were conducted at various locations in Nevada, from November 14 through December 12, 2001.

Observation of the Audit of the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management

On December 11-14, 2001, Division of Waste Management staff observed the Department of Energy's (DOE's) quality assurance (QA) audit of DOE's Office of Environmental Management, in Germantown, Maryland. The audit conducted by DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) reviewed the DOE Office of Safety, Health and Security (EM-5) implementation of the high-level waste QA program. The audit evaluated EM-5's implementation of the OCRWM QA program for EM-5 programs controlling high-level waste processing at DOE sites. The OCRWM audit team identified two potential deficiencies in the areas of training and corrective action. In general, the staff agreed with the OCRWM audit team's conclusions, findings, and recommendations presented at the post-audit briefing. The staff is documenting its observations and comments and will provide them to DOE.

Participation at American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting

On December 10-14, 2001, staff from the Division of Waste Management and the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (Center) took part in the American Geophysical Union Fall meeting in San Francisco, California. NRC and Center staff presented six papers on technical and regulatory issues associated with Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Staff also hosted a special session that addressed radionuclide colloidal transport mechanisms. About 200 people attended the NRC-sponsored session, with half of the attendees from universities and the other half from Government agencies. Scientists from the Department of Energy national laboratories presented results from their work conducted in response to issue-resolution technical agreements. Staff had previously set up the issue-resolution agreements, and the agreements document the information that the Department of Energy needs to provide to resolve precicensing issues associated with Yucca Mountain.

ATG Nuclear Services Filed for Chapter 11

ATG Nuclear Services (ATG), which is a radioactive waste management company, filed for protection and reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code on December 4, 2001. ATG holds a NRC -approved transportation Quality Assurance (QA) Program and three Certificates of Compliance (COCs) for Type B transportation packagings. In a December 11, 2001, letter, ATG requested that NRC discontinue its evaluation of the amended ATG QA Program currently under review by the Spent Fuel Project Office and stated that it will continue to operate in accordance with the current NRC-approved QA Program. Staff confirmed that qualified personnel are available to operate and maintain the QA Program and COCs.

Meeting with Representatives of General Nuclear Systems, Inc.

On December 13, 2001, Spent Fuel Project Office staff met with representatives of General Nuclear Systems, Inc. (GNSI) to discuss licensing issues associated with possible design changes to the CASTOR V/21 spent fuel dry cask storage system holding Certificate of Compliance No. 72-1000. The design changes could range from minor changes, to ease decontamination of the cask, to the more complicated technical review of the storage of high-burnup fuel assemblies, increases in the heat load of the cask, and the use of a new basket designed to hold 24 fuel assemblies instead of the current design of 21 fuel assemblies. GNSI indicated that an amendment application could be filed in mid-2003.

Meeting with Foster Wheeler Environmental Corporation on Idaho Spent Fuel Facility

On December 11, 2001, NRC staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office (SFPO) and Region IV, and staff from the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (Center) met with representatives of the Foster Wheeler Environmental Corporation (FWENC) and the Department of Energy (DOE) at the Center offices in San Antonio, Texas, to discuss the November 19, 2001, application for the proposed Idaho Spent Fuel Facility (ISF). The proposed facility will be adjacent to the existing DOE dry-storage facility for the TMI-2 fuel debris, and will store spent fuel from the Peach Bottom 1 high-temperature gas reactor and Shippingport light-water breeder reactor, currently stored in a DOE pool facility within 500 yards of the proposed ISF site. The public meeting was held at the request of the applicant, FWENC, to give it the opportunity to describe the facility design concept and the format and content of the application. FWENC has requested NRC approval of the application by May 2003, and is also anxious to receive NRC's acceptance review letter. The SFPO Project Manager (PM) indicated that the staff, with Center assistance, has begun the acceptance review, and that a formal schedule will be issued when that review is completed. The PM further indicated that interface issues between DOE and FWENC will be an important area of focus in the review of this application.

Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Union of Concerned Scientists; Denial of Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-54-1)

A document that denies a petition for rulemaking submitted by the Union of Concerned Scientists was published in the Federal Register on December 18, 2001 (66 FR 65141). The petitioner requested that the NRC amend its regulations governing requirements for renewal of operating licenses for nuclear power plants to address potential concerns about aging degradation of liquid and gaseous radioactive waste systems. The petition is denied because liquid and gaseous radioactive waste management systems are not involved in design and licensing basis events considered for license renewal and the existing regulatory process is acceptable for maintaining the performance of the radioactive waste systems throughout the period of extended operation in order to keep exposures to radiation at the current levels below regulatory limits consistent with the conclusions made in the applicable regulations.

Fire Protection (Part 50)

A document announcing the availability of draft wording of a possible amendment to NRC's regulations governing fire protection requirements for holders of operating nuclear power plant licenses was published in the Federal Register on December 20, 2001 (66 FR 65661). The NRC is seeking public comment on the draft regulatory text. The comment period closes February 4, 2002.

Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the Period of
December 14, 2001 through December 20, 2001:

Duane Arnold Energy Center, Iowa Electric Light & Power Co., 9/5/72 letter, A. D. Anderson, Iowa State Liaison Officer, referenced in 03/73 Final Environmental Statement. (FOIA/PA-2002-0063)

Proposed Rule, Licensing of Production & Utilization Facilities; Antitrust Review Procedures, comments of LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby & MacRae. (FOIA/PA-2002-0064)

Site assessment, NY-W. 45th & 8th Ave., 620 8th Ave., New York, NY. (FOIA/PA-2002-0065)

Site assessment, NY-34th St., 408 West 34th St., New York, NY. (FOIA/PA-2002-0066)

Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Arrivals		
ANDERSON, Angel	STUDENT CLERK	RIII
CROWE, Eddy	REACTOR ENGINEER	RIV
GRAHAM, Christopher	ELECTRONICS ENGINEER	NRR

December 21, 2001

ENCLOSURE I

Office of the Secretary
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Document Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. SECY-01-0208	11/21/01	Status of Potassium Iodide Activities
SRM on 01-0208	12/18/01	(same)
Commission Voting Record on 01-0208	12/18/01	(same)
Information Papers		
1. SECY-01-0222	12/13/01	SECY-01-0222 Weekly Information Report - Week Ending December 7, 2001
2. SECY-01-0218	12/5/01	Update of the Risk-Informed Regulation Implementation Plan
Memoranda		
1. M011205B	12/20/01	Staff Requirements - Meeting with Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS)

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, dated December 14, 2001, provides update on NRC's ongoing activities related to KI.
2. Letter to George Richardson, First Selectman, Stanley Lane, Second Selectman, and Benjamin Crehore III, Third Selectman, Town of Westport, Maine, dated December 13, 2001, concerns safeguards, security, and safety procedures at the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station in Wiscasset, Maine, in light of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.
3. Letter to Mary Ott, Co-Chairman, Citizens Urging Responsible Energy, dated December 13, 2001, concerns request for public hearing within the emergency planning zone for the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station.
4. Letter to Ida L. Castro, Chairwoman, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, dated December 13, 2001, provides NRC's "Affirmative Action Program Plan Update and Report of Accomplishments" for hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with handicaps.

December 21, 2001

ENCLOSURE O

5. Letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein dated December 12, 2001, concerns security of nuclear power plants.

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste; Notice of Meeting.
2. ACRS Subcommittee on Materials and Metallurgy; Notice of Meeting.
3. ACRS Subcommittee on Thermal-Hydraulics Phenomena; Notice of Meeting.

December 21, 2001

ENCLOSURE O

Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Indian Point Unit 2

On December 20, 2001, a public meeting was conducted at the Verplanck Fire Station, in Verplanck, New York, between the NRC staff and Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the status of performance improvement efforts at Indian Point Unit 2 (IP2), a plant with multiple degraded cornerstones under the NRC's Reactor Oversight Program.

During the meeting, the NRC briefly summarized its assessment of performance at the station over the past year. The NRC had previously asked Entergy to summarize their recent self-assessments, and to discuss performance improvement efforts primarily in the areas of equipment reliability, design and configuration control, human performance and problem identification and resolution. During Entergy's presentation, the NRC staff questioned licensee management on recent issues such as operator requalification, reactivity management, human performance, and actions to improve station-wide accountability.

Questions and comments discussed following the meeting, with both elected officials and members of the public, included: plant security (specifically the susceptibility of the containment and spent fuel to aircraft impact in the post-September 11, 2001 environment), maintenance and engineering backlogs, and emergency evacuation plans. The NRC representatives, led by Regional Administrator Hub Miller, responded to these questions and comments. Approximately 150 people attended the meeting.

Advanced Medical Imaging and Nuclear Services

NRC issued an Order suspending the license of Advanced Medical Imaging and Nuclear Services, a nuclear medicine clinic located in Easton, PA. The Order was signed by the Deputy Executive Director for Materials, Research and State Programs on December 14, 2001, and issued to the licensee the same day. The Order was issued to Advanced Medical for repeated failure to comply with NRC requirements, specifically, for operating (administering patient doses) over a significant period of time without a Radiation Safety Officer or Authorized User. Region I staff confirmed that the licensee has suspended operations and placed material in safe storage. The licensee is in the process of preparing a response to the Order.

Maine Yankee Transfers GTCC to the ISFSI

On December 19, 2001, Maine Yankee transported the first Vertical Concrete Cask (VCC) loaded with greater-than-class C-(GTCC) waste to the sites Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI). This is the first use of the NAC International UMS storage system which is designed and analyzed for a 50-year service life. The GTCC was loaded into a stainless steel transportable storage canister, transferred from the refueling cavity with a Universal Transport Cask, and then loaded into the VCC. Radiation surveys performed by the licensee on the outside of the VCC showed contact dose rates of less than 5 mR/h (limit is 50 mR/h) and 20 mR/h at the lower vent (limit is 100 mR/h). Maine Yankee plans to load three additional VCC's

with GTCC and transfer them to the ISFSI within the next month. Maine Yankee plans to begin loading and transferring spent fuel to the ISFSI in April 2002.

Confirmatory Survey Performed at Heritage Minerals, Inc.

During the week of December 10, 2001, contract staff from the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) performed confirmatory survey measurements at the Heritage Minerals, Inc. (HMI), Lakehurst, NJ site. The facility is on the NRC site decommissioning management plan (SDMP) list. The survey was conducted following excavation and removal of thorium-contaminated soil (monazite sand) stored in an outdoor controlled area, and remediation of buildings and equipment. A final survey report which documented status of remediated areas was submitted by HMI for NRC review.

The monazite pile that contained the majority of licensed material was removed to below grade, but preliminary indications are that additional soil removal will be necessary in downwind areas near the pile. Building equipment at the site was also found to have residual contamination from windblown sand on lower surface structures. The extent of additional work required prior to unrestricted release will be discussed with licensee representatives in a meeting to be held in January 2002.

Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Tennessee Valley Authority - Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant Tour and Licensee Meeting

On December 17, 2001, the Regional Administrator, accompanied by the Director, Division of Reactor Safety, toured the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant and met with licensee management and the resident inspectors. Issues discussed included current plant status, security issues and license renewal.

Department of the Army - Fort McClellan, Alabama

On December 18, 2001, the Region issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to the Army confirming their actions to secure licensed material excavated during decommissioning activities, and characterize and dispose of the material promptly. An inspection on December 13 had found that the contractor performing the decommissioning had declared bankruptcy and had ceased work, leaving certain materials without proper controls.

Region IV
Items of Interest
Week Ending December 21, 2001

Regulatory Conference with Cooper Nuclear Station

A Regulatory Conference was conducted with Cooper Nuclear Station on December 18, 2001, in the Region IV office. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the risk significance of three potential White findings and associated apparent violations involving emergency preparedness deficiencies addressed in NRC Inspection Report 50-298/01-09. These three findings involve the untimely notification to state and local response organizations following declaration of an Alert on June 25, 2001; the untimely activation of the emergency response facilities on June 25, 2001; and the failure to maintain an adequate emergency operations facility to support emergency response.

Special Inspection at South Texas Project

A special inspection was initiated on December 18, 2001, to review the circumstances and corrective actions associated with a Unit 1 essential cooling water pump becoming inoperable due to small fish clogging the discharge strainer. The inspection is expected to be completed by December 21, 2001.

Predecisional Enforcement Conference with H&H X-Ray Services, Inc.

The Director, Division of Nuclear Materials Safety Division, and members of the Region IV staff held a Predecisional Enforcement Conference closed meeting on December 19 with representatives from H&H X-Ray Services, Inc. to discuss an apparent violation of NRC requirements as discussed in NRC Inspection Report 030-17191/01-01.

Fire at Fort Calhoun Station

On December 19, 2001, a fire occurred at Fort Calhoun Station. The fire was located in a corridor from Safety Injection Pump Room 22 to the containment tendon gallery. The fire was caused by a malfunction of an extension cord and subsequent ignition of a bag of trash, most likely used cloth coveralls. The licensee's fire brigade was dispatched and extinguished the fire approximately 20 minutes after the fire alarm was received at 2:48 a.m. (CST). Although assistance was requested from the Blair City Fire Department, the fire was out by the time they arrived at the site.

The Region plans to perform a special inspection the week of January 14, 2002. The purposes of the special inspection will be to review the effectiveness of the licensee's corrective actions and the appropriateness of the lack of an emergency declaration.