

April 5, 2002

The Honorable W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to apprise you of an organizational change which the Commission is undertaking to enhance the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) safeguards and security programs. Shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks I, with the full support of the Commission, directed the NRC staff to undertake a comprehensive review of every aspect of our security requirements. Our objective was to assure ourselves that our already robust security regime is appropriate to the new circumstances presented by the current threat environment. The review includes a re-analysis of the agency's threat assessment framework and the design basis threat; re-evaluation of nuclear facility vulnerabilities and access authorization processes; re-evaluation of emergency preparedness and response; and a re-evaluation of NRC's infrastructure, resources, and communications.

With regard to NRC's infrastructure, I specifically directed the staff to review the agency's organizational structure, staffing, and training in the security and safeguards area. As a result of this review, the Commission has approved the establishment of an Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response to consolidate and streamline selected NRC security, safeguards, and incident response responsibilities and resources. This newly created office will be on a par with our other major program offices, will report to the Deputy Executive Director for Reactor Programs, and will have an initial complement of more than ninety staff members. The move is effective April 7, 2002.

Among the intended benefits of the consolidation are improved communications and coordination both within the agency and with external entities, including Federal and State agencies. The consolidation will also integrate the NRC's management of classified information, unclassified but sensitive safeguards information, and secure communications facilities within one organization. Resources for the functions to be consolidated in the new office will be transferred from existing NRC offices without an increase in the agency's FY 2002 and FY 2003 budgets.

If you would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Richard A. Meserve

cc: Representative John D. Dingell

Identical letter to:

The Honorable W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
cc: Representative John D. Dingell

The Honorable Harry Reid, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Infrastructure, and Nuclear Safety  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
cc: Senator James M. Inhofe

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  
cc: Representative Rick Boucher

The Honorable Sonny Callahan, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
cc: Representative Peter J. Visclosky

The Honorable James M. Jeffords, Chairman  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
cc: Senator Bob Smith

The Honorable Harry Reid, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
cc: Senator Pete V. Domenici