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NOTE TO: File

FROM: Thomas G. Hiltz

SUBJ: SUMMARY OF CHAIRMAN'S VISIT TO SURRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

On August 31, 1999, the Chairman visited the Surry Nuclear Power Plant site located near Surry, VA. During the site visit, the Chairman met with the Resident inspection staff, met with senior utility management, toured the secondary plant and toured the independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI). The Region II Regional Administrator, Luis Reyes, accompanied the Chairman. The discussions focused on 5 main topic areas: power reactor license renewal, ISFSI license renewal, physical security requirements, ongoing efforts to repair a leaking spent fuel cask, and status of Surry's participation in the revised source term pilot project.

With regard to power reactor license renewal, VA Power indicated that they will continue to closely monitor staff and industry license renewal efforts. They plan to participate, to a greater extent, in these discussions as they consider a joint license renewal application submittal in 2002 for the Surry and North Anna facilities. They encouraged continued progress in addressing generic license renewal issues and in further streamlining the license renewal process.

Senior utility managers noted that the license renewal process for ISFSI is not as developed as the license renewal process for power reactors and emphasized the need for continuity and certainty in ISFSI renewal process. VA Power suggested that more needed to be done to develop and issue renewal guidance. The Surry ISFSI license expires in 2006 and the licensee indicated that they plan to begin renewal activities by August 2000. For the renewal process, they suggested that NRC consider a process that would treat some aspects of the renewal approach consistent with NRC treatment for a general license. Similar to the generic EIS developed to support power reactor license renewal, the licensee suggested that the NRC staff explore whether a generic EIS is possible for ISFSI license renewal.

The licensee indicated that they spend approximately \$12.7 million/year to meet physical security requirements at North Anna and Surry. The proposed new rule to modify some of the physical security requirements associated with 10 CFR 73.55 were viewed as too narrow and too prescriptive and requiring excessive drills. In order to be less prescriptive, the licensee encouraged the NRC to be more flexible and consider placing more responsibility on licensees to ensure physical security readiness - similar to how NRC regulates emergency preparedness. Some of the security requirements, they suggested, that are not necessary included escorting badged employee vehicles and providing for an immediate response to certain alarms.

The licensee provided an overview of ongoing repair efforts associated with the leaking Castor X/33 spent fuel cask. During the tour of the facility, the Chairman discussed the problem with first line management working on the problem and examined the suspected failed metallic O-ring seal.

Surry continues to work with the NRC staff, in a pilot program approach, to take appropriate credit for a revised source term. Some of the more immediate benefits of incorporating the revised source term into their licensing basis include 1) greater access to containment during refueling outages and 2) increased allowable containment isolation times.

In the final de-brief, senior utility management encouraged and supported continued NRC change to help better focus utility and NRC resources on those aspects of plant design and operation that are most important to safety. They suggested 3 areas that NRC may want to consider to future improvements: fire protection, physical security and emergency preparedness.

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