

February 20, 2003

FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Initial) FIELD(Last Name)
FIELD(Suffix)
FIELD(Company)
FIELD(Address - Line1)
FIELD(Address - Line2)
FIELD(City), FIELD(State) FIELD(Zip Code)

Dear FIELD(First Name) FIELD(Middle Initial) FIELD(Last Name):

You are receiving this letter because you are on the mailing list for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) Package Performance Study (PPS) of spent nuclear fuel transportation packages. NRC would like to inform you of the PPS progress, request your comments on the enclosed draft test protocols document, and invite you to the public meetings that will be held in March to obtain comments on the test protocols. The PPS is a confirmatory research program focused on the probabilities and consequences of severe transportation accidents – the very small fraction of accidents that could result in impact, or thermal forces on casks, that exceed NRC's standards for cask design. The PPS will use a combination of testing and analyses to develop data and validate methods of analysis for use in transportation risk assessments. A public participation process will continue as PPS proceeds, to ensure that PPS considers stakeholder concerns and to increase public confidence in NRC's regulatory activities, considering potential future increases in the number of spent fuel transports.

The PPS began in 1999 with a scoping phase, consisting of a series of public meetings to identify stakeholder issues with transportation risk studies and identify potential areas of further research. The scoping phase of PPS culminated in 2000, with issuance of the PPS issues and resolution options report (hereafter, Issues Report) for comment, and an associated series of public meetings. NRC has reissued the Issues Report, together with summaries of the public meetings and written comments received, as NUREG/CR-6768. A CD-ROM copy of NUREG/CR-6768 is enclosed for information. The Issues Report identified the lines of investigation for PPS: (1) use recent accident statistics/data to reconstruct train and train accident event trees; (2) perform a high-speed impact test on a full-scale rail cask, to compare pre-test analyses with test results; (3) perform a long-duration fire test to compare pre-test analyses with test results; and (4) perform experiments on fuel pellets, rods, and assemblies to examine failure modes and fracturing properties, to support radioactive material release analyses.

The PPS Test Protocols Report (NUREG-1768), a copy of which is enclosed, is the first major PPS document since the Issues Report. At this time, the Test Protocols are being issued for comment. The Test Protocol Report describes, at a conceptual level, the impact and fire tests that are currently planned for PPS, along with the goals of these tests. Several other PPS tasks, including the accident statistics/data work, historical accidents investigation, and uncertainty/sensitivity analyses for risk assessments, are planned, but are not part of the Test Protocols Report, because it focuses on testing. Fuel tests are not discussed in the Test Protocols Report because those tests are proceeding on a different schedule than the impact and fire tests being conducted under the PPS.

Comments are being solicited on the tests while at a conceptual level, because detailed planning and procurement for a specific series of tests will be a resource-intensive effort, and the comments could result in changes to the test approaches and plans. We are particularly interested in your views on several points, including: (1) the type and number of cask designs that should be used in the tests; (2) the speed and orientation for the impact test; (3) the duration of the cask fire test; and (4) the ability of the tests proposed to provide risk insights consistent with NRC's risk-informed regulatory initiatives. I call your attention to the specific questions listed in the "Executive Summary" of Enclosure 1; however, feel free to comment on any aspect of the protocols report. After comments on the Test Protocols have been collected and considered, and the PPS plans are modified as necessary, an NRC contractor will develop detailed test plans and procedures for each of the PPS testing programs. The detailed plans, procedures, and tests will be made available.

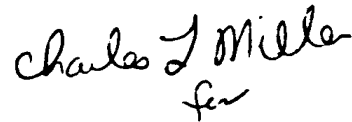
NRC invites you to submit written comments and attend the public meetings to facilitate discussion and comment on the PPS Test Protocols. Written comments will be accepted until May 30, 2003. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the Commission is able to ensure consideration only for comments received before this date. The meetings are planned as follows:

- *Workshop:* March 6, 2003, 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., in the White Flint North auditorium at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Headquarters, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852;
- *Workshop:* March 12, 2003, 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., at the Clark County Building Department, Russell/Cameron Office, 4701 West Russell Road, Las Vegas, NV 89118;
- *Public Meeting/Seminar:* March 13, 2002, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., at the Mountain View Casino and Bowl, 1750 South Pahrump Valley Boulevard, Pahrump, NV 89048; and
- *Workshop:* March 19, 2003, 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., at the Embassy Suites Hotel O'Hare, 5500 N. River Road, Rosemont, IL 60018.

The workshops will be convened in a "roundtable format." To have manageable discussions, the number of participants at the table will be limited. NRC, through the meeting facilitator, will ensure that a broad spectrum of interests participates at each meeting, including citizen and environmental groups, nuclear and transportation industry, academia, and governmental representatives at the Federal, State, and local level. Other members of the public are welcome to attend, and there will be opportunities to comment on each agenda item to be discussed by roundtable participants. The public meetings/seminar will consist of a presentation and opportunity for the public to comment. Written comments will also be accepted at all meetings. This report is available for comment at NRC's Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/>. You may also view the report at <http://ttd.sandia.gov/nrc/modal.htm>.

A World-Wide Web site has been established for dissemination of PPS information and documents to interested members of the public. Electronic copies of the enclosed documents and additional information on the public meetings can be obtained at <http://ttd.sandia.gov/nrc/modal.htm>. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ms. Amy M. Snyder of my staff by telephone at (301) 415-8580.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Charles J. Miller in black ink.

E. William Brach, Director
Spent Fuel Project Office
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Enclosures:

1. Draft NUREG-1768, "Package Performance Study Test Protocols (Draft Report for Comment)"
2. NUREG/CR-6768, "Spent Nuclear Fuel Transportation Package Performance Study Issues Report" (CD ROM)

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DATE:	02/10/2003	02/11/2003	02/13/03	02/13/03	02/13/03	02/13/03
OFC:	SFPO			SFPO		
NAME:	RLewis*			CLMiller*		
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