Dr. Mario V. Bonaca, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

June 23, 2003

SUBJECT: ACRS LETTER DATED APRIL 17, 2003, "PROPOSED NRC GENERIC LETTER 2003-XX: CONTROL ROOM HABITABILITY"

Dear Dr. Bonaca:

Your letter discussed recommendations and conclusions with respect to the ACRS review of the proposed NRC Generic Letter on control room habitability. The letter addressed an area of concern with respect to potential complications for licensee response. We will be participating in workshops on these issues that the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) is planning for June 2003, and will clarify use of the guidance as necessary.

Your letter suggested that NRC consider using the Human Factors Research Program to develop quantitative information on potential performance degradation when control rooms are contaminated with smoke or operators are wearing special protective equipment. We agree that there is little data in this arena. As we go forward with the implementation of the Generic Letter, we request an opportunity to interface with the ACRS to better understand the intent of the recommendation including any suggested approaches.

The ACRS has been involved from the beginning of this effort, and has provided significant input toward the resolution of issues with control room habitability. We will continue to solicit the opinions of the ACRS as work progresses and will provide a briefing to the ACRS on control room habitability issues once licensees have responded to the requests of the Generic Letter and we have reviewed and analyzed the responses.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
SECY

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