



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

January 9, 1995

Dr. Daniel S. Goldin, Administrator  
NASA Headquarters/Code A  
Washington, D.C. 20546-0001

Dear Dr. Goldin:

I am writing to you about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff involvement in the Interagency Nuclear Safety Review Panel (INSRP), which is currently focusing on the safety of the Cassini space probe mission. Dr. John H. Gibbons, Office of Science and Technology Policy, requested, in his letter of October 17, 1994, to the Chairman, NRC, that NRC participate in the INSRP. NRC responded positively on November 28, 1994, by nominating Drs. Norman A. Eisenberg and Robert B. Neel to serve, respectively, as principal and alternate technical advisors.

During the week of December 12, 1994, the expanded INSRP, with participants from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, and NRC, had an initial set of meetings. It became clear from these meetings that effective and full participation by the NRC staff would require a significant commitment of resources. As you may be aware, NRC, like some other Federal regulatory agencies, is required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA - 90) to recover approximately 100 percent of the cost of its activities through fees. Thus, absent some reimbursement, NRC licensees and others within NRC's regulatory authority will pay for the costs of the NRC INSRP activities even though these activities will be of little or no benefit to them. For these reasons, I request that NASA agree to reimburse NRC for its costs incurred supporting INSRP safety evaluations.

In a briefing to me on December 20, 1994, my staff and representatives from INSRP advised that NRC support of INSRP activities was needed in three areas: (1) direct participation in the panel by our technical advisor(s); (2) participation in several of the five technical subpanels, convened by INSRP, by NRC staff with appropriate backgrounds; and (3) contractor support for activities of the subpanels, including advice from technical experts. My staff has estimated the cost for this support to be approximately \$604,000 in FY 1995; the amount in FY 1996 and FY 1997 would be approximately \$622,000 and \$640,000, respectively, to reflect an inflation factor of three percent. Just under half of this amount is for contractor support, whereas slightly more than half is for support of NRC staff.

I hope that you will support my request for funding of this activity. If we cannot obtain sufficient reimbursement from another Federal agency, then we will need to reduce our participation in the INSRP activities to a minimum, so as not to impose an unfair burden. If you agree with this funding request, I suggest that your staff meet with my staff to arrange the details of an interagency agreement. Mr. Robert M. Bernero, Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, or his designee, will be happy to meet with your staff on this matter. Incidentally, Mr. Bernero has had a long-standing

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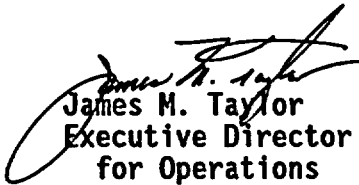
D. Goldin

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personal interest and involvement in both INSRP and the use of radioisotope thermoelectric generators in space exploration. Mr. Bernero may be reached at (301) 415-7800.

Since my staff has commenced activities supporting INSRP, I would greatly appreciate a rapid response to this request and thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



James M. Taylor  
Executive Director  
for Operations

cc: INSRP Members  
J. Gibbons, OSTP  
F. Tarantino, OSTP  
J. Dailey, NASA



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J. Gibbons, OSTP  
F. Tarantino, OSTP  
J. Dailey, NASA

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