



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

December 6, 1996

MEMORANDUM TO: E. Thomas Boulette, Chairman
Nuclear Safety Research Review Committee

FROM: John T. Greeves, Director *J. Greeves*
Division of Waste Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

SUBJECT: RECENT STAFF EFFORTS TO DEVELOP GUIDANCE ON THE FORMAL USE
OF EXPERT JUDGMENT IN REGULATORY DECISION MAKING

In its May 13, 1996, meeting report, the Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA) Subcommittee of the Nuclear Safety Research Review Committee (NSRRC) commented on the need to develop formal guidance on the use of formal expert judgment in regulatory decision-making. Members of the NSRRC may wish to note that the Division of Waste Management (DWM) recently completed guidance on the use of formal expert elicitation in the high-level radioactive waste (HLW) program. This guidance, in the form of a Branch Technical Position (BTP), is designated NUREG-1536 and was printed in November 1996. A copy of NUREG-1536 is attached for your information. This guidance was developed for the HLW licensing process, but may have some application to the so-called "expert panels" used in nuclear reactor regulation.

In completing this effort, I wish to note that DWM staff, consistent with the direction received from the Commission during a June 1995 briefing on this subject, coordinated development of the NUREG with the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, the Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's PRA Coordinating Committee. Moreover, the Office of the General Counsel reviewed the BTP and had no legal objection to issuing it as a NUREG. NUREG-1563 contains the staff's review and analysis of public comments reviewed on an early draft of the guidance as well as the comments of the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste.

In NUREG-1563, DWM staff has set forth technical positions that: (1) provide general guidelines on those circumstances that may warrant the use of a formal process for obtaining expert judgments (i.e., expert elicitation); (2) describe acceptable procedures for conducting expert elicitation when formally elicited judgments are used to support a demonstration of compliance with NRC's geologic disposal regulation, currently set forth in 10 CFR Part 60;

Contact: Michael P. Lee, NMSS
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and (3) requires updating the conclusion of an elicitation as additional information becomes available. The staff believes that its guidance is comprehensive and consistent with current decision-science practice.

Attachment: NUREG-1563

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Attachment: NUREG-1563

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cc: D.L. Morrison/RES
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