

October 17, 2003

LICENSEE: U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD)

FACILITY: N.S. Savannah

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF MEETING BETWEEN MARAD AND NRC STAFFS

On September 24, 2003, representatives of the NRC staff met at NRC Headquarters with representatives of the MARAD, the licensee for the N.S. Savannah. Representatives of the licensee's contractor also attended the meeting. Enclosure one is a list of meeting attendees.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential plans for decommissioning the N.S. Savannah. The N.S. Savannah was the only U.S. operational nuclear-powered commercial cargo/passenger vessel. The ship was taken out of service in 1970. The N.S. Savannah is currently located in the James River, Virginia at the James River Reserve Fleet.

Topics discussed at the meeting were: MARAD general information; ship and reactor condition; radiological spaces; licensee response to a notice of violation; selected construction details; decommissioning plans; activities after reactor vessel removal; environmental management; and the license termination plan. Enclosure two are briefing slides used by the licensee at the meeting which contain additional details on the topics of discussion.

The licensee stated that funding had been requested to start decommissioning planning. The licensee would like to proceed with decommissioning such that the reactor pressure vessel would be shipped to the Barnwell, South Carolina waste disposal site in the 2007 - 2008 time frame. Some initial decommissioning work was performed in the 1970s which included removing fuel and resins from the ship and draining coolant from the primary system. The fuel was returned to the AEC.

Unique aspects of the N.S. Savannah design (the shipboard reactor can be moved to another location for decommissioning and the compact reactor compartment limits the extent of the ship that will be impacted by decommissioning activities) and license (the license contains a requirement that NRC approval is needed for dismantlement or disposal) were discussed. Similarities exist between the licensing status of the N.S. Savannah and that of the Saxton Nuclear Experimental Facility at the start of decommissioning. MARAD has looked at the Saxton licensing process used for decommissioning as part of their planning.

The importance of close communication between the NRC and licensee staffs was stressed. MARAD will keep the NRC staff aware of developments in decommissioning funding.

Sincerely,

***/RA by Warren Eresian Acting for/***

Alexander Adams, Jr., Senior Project Manager  
Research and Test Reactors Section  
New, Research and Test Reactors Program  
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-238

Enclosures: 1. List of Meeting Attendees  
2. MARAD presentation slides

cc w/enclosures: Please see next page

N.S. Savannah

Docket No. 50-238

cc:

Mr. Erhard W. Koehler  
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Mr. Michael F. Bagley  
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Mr. Robert Rohr  
Fleet Operations and Maintenance Officer  
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Fort Eustis, VA 23604



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