

December 22, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: Martin J. Virgilio, Director
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

FROM: Donald A. Cool, Ph.D., Senior Advisor */RA/*
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

SUBJECT: MEETING BETWEEN THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION AND THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE
CONCERNING EMERGING ISSUES IN RADIATION
PROTECTION

On December 17, 2003, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff met with the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) concerning emerging issues in radiation protection. Attachment 1 lists the meeting attendees.

A public meeting notice was issued on December 3, 2003, and was posted on the NRC's external (public) web page (ADAMS Accession No. ML033370170). The notice was available as a handout at the meeting. The discussions included the views of NEI on emerging issues in radiation protection, with a particular focus on the current views of NEI on activities of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). NEI also provided a brief discussion of plans for strategic planning in radiation protection for reactors.

Emerging Issues in Radiation Protection

The NEI representatives presented a draft white paper (Attachment 2) outlining the evolving thinking of the nuclear industry in response to activities of the ICRP for general recommendations, and recommendations on protection of the environment. NEI reviewed the topics in the draft paper, including their views regarding limits and constraints, public dose limits, levels requiring no further action, collective dose, safety and security of sources, and protection of the environment. NEI indicated that they support updating the regulatory structure to keep pace with changing recommendations, but that changes should be soundly based on science, and that flexibility was necessary to avoid impacts on uses of radioactive material.

Under protection of the environment, NEI indicated that they are supportive of the development of a framework that allow a demonstration that significant impacts are not occurring. NEI therefore supports a carefully considered development of the framework suggested by the ICRP, and the associated work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The NRC staff noted that they had received an invitation to participate in an IAEA meeting to formulate an action plan on protection of the environment, planned to engage the Commission prior to participation, and that further discussions of detailed proposals with industry before the meeting in February would be useful.

Strategic Planning in Radiation Protection

The NEI representatives described current radiation protection for reactors. In particular, NEI described efforts to improve performance in the fall outage cycle of 2003, and plans to incorporate lessons learned and plans for the spring 2004 cycle. In the longer term, NEI plans to engage plant radiation protection managers on planning of health physics activities, personnel, and support over the next 15 years, given the current trends in the availability of qualified individuals at both the technical and professional levels.

Public Participation

One member of the public noted they had started as an health physics technician, and expressed support for the plans and approaches discussed.

- Attachments:
1. Meeting Attendees
 2. NEI Draft White Paper

Attachment 1. Meeting Attendees:

Chuck Dugger, NEI
Ralph Andersen, NEI
Martin Virgilio, NRC/NMSS
Margaret Federline, NRC/NMSS
Donald Cool, NRC/NMSS
Charles Miller, NRC/NMSS
John Greeves, NRC/NMSS
Cheryl Trottier, NRC/RES
Roger Pedersen, NRC/NRR
Alan Roecklein, NRC/NRR
Tim Harris, NRC/NMSS
Matt Blevins, NRC/NMSS
Rebecca Tadesse, NRC/NMSS
Scott Flanders, NRC/NMSS
Christiana Lui, NRC/NMSS
Vince Holahan, NRC/RES
Lane Hay, SERCH Bechtel