



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WASTE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

ACNWS-0075

PDR

November 16, 1995

The Honorable Shirley Ann Jackson
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Dear Chairman Jackson:

SUBJECT: SUMMARY REPORT - SEVENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WASTE, OCTOBER 24-26, 1995, AND OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

During its 78th meeting, October 24-26, 1995, held at Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste discussed several matters and completed the following report.

REPORT

Comments on the High-Level Radioactive Waste Research Program in Hydrology (Report to The Honorable Shirley Ann Jackson, Chairman, NRC, from Paul W. Pomeroy, Chairman, ACNW, dated November 6, 1995)

HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

1. Reviewing NRC's Programmatic Approach to Low-Level Waste Management

After presenting the background for SECY-95-201, "Alternatives to Terminating the NRC Low-Level Radioactive Waste (LLW) Disposal Program," the NRC staff discussed the implications of the various options presented in that paper. A representative of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) also stressed the need for a strong NRC regulatory involvement in the LLW area currently and in the future, summarizing his position by indicating that the NEI "supports a role for NRC greater than that described in Option 2." A private citizen also stated his belief that the national LLW program needs NRC selective guidance and oversight "more than ever."

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Conclusion

The Committee will continue discussions on this subject during its next meeting on November 15-16, 1995, and has invited representatives of potentially affected groups.

2. Meeting with Representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency

The Committee met with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who discussed public comments received thus far on the National Research Council's Report entitled "Technical Bases for Yucca Mountain Standards." EPA was not prepared to discuss a proposed final agency position on any of the recommendations in the report, since the public comment period was still open. The ACNW endorsed the establishment of a joint NRC-EPA technical team whose task was to ensure that the eventual standard would result in a meaningful and enforceable regulation. [This effort is a high priority Committee issue.]

Conclusion

The Committee will continue to monitor the evolution of this activity.

3. Residual Levels for Decontamination

The Committee was briefed by the NRC staff on the status of the work to determine acceptable residual radiation levels for release of a decommissioned nuclear facility for other uses. This presentation focused on the proposed implementation of the rule. The ACNW had previously commented on the draft proposed rule after staff presentations at its 72nd meeting in a report to the Commission dated April 28, 1995.

The staff presented many of the comments discussed at its recent September 29, 1995 workshop. In addition, an NEI representative noted that industry was ready to use several of its facilities in a "pilot" program to field test the efficacy of the proposed rule in "real-life" situations. The staff indicated it would take such an offer under advisement and would report back to the Committee on the survey/background issue raised during this presentation.

Conclusion

The Committee will continue its review of this subject at a future meeting.

4. Meeting with the Director, NRC's Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards

Items of current interest related to the Division of Waste Management programs discussed by its Director, John Greeves, included:

- the effect of current budget proposals on DOE activities, such as surface-based testing and excavation, and on NRC activities, such as the vertical slice approach,
- the formation of an NRC-EPA liaison group to study the impact of the recent National Research Council's report on the Technical Bases for Yucca Mountain Standards,
- DOE's investment analysis for the Yucca Mountain Project,
- the low-level waste options paper and the Branch Technical Position on Performance Assessment, and
- a draft guidance document on the use of expert judgment.

Conclusion

The ACNW and the staff agreed to integrate priority issues on each other's agenda into a combined priority list and schedule reviews at mutually acceptable times.

5. Proposed Schedule for the 79th ACNW Meeting

The Committee agreed to consider the following during the 79th ACNW Meeting, November 15-16, 1995:

Key Technical Issues - The Committee will discuss with the NRC staff the development of Key Technical Issues (KTIs) and how these issues will be used to solve licensing questions.

Meeting with the Commission - The Committee will meet with the Commissioners to discuss items of mutual interest.

Reviewing NRC's Programmatic Approach to Low-Level Waste Management - The Committee will continue to review alternatives to the future course of NRC's Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Program. Members of the NRC staff will participate, as well as representatives from other organizations.

Preparation of ACNW Reports - The Committee will discuss proposed reports, including comments on the NRC staff's

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low-level waste alternatives paper and the NRC staff's vertical slice approach and KTI program.

Meeting with the Director, NRC's Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards - The Director will discuss items of current interest related to the Division of Waste Management programs.

LIST OF FOLLOW-UP MATTERS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS

- The Committee will meet with the Commission on November 16, 1995.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul W. Pomeroy". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Paul W. Pomeroy
Chairman