

March 19, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: Those on the Attached List

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

SUBJECT: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENTS

This memorandum provides updated guidance on the review of environmental assessments (EAs). In previous memorandum (e.g., see memo dated July 29, 2003, ADAMS Accession Number: ML032110331) and NUREG-1748, "Environmental Review Guidance for Licensing Actions Associated with NMSS Programs," staff was directed to send all EAs to the Environmental and Performance Assessment Branch (EPAB) for review prior to issuance. Over the past year, EPAB staff has seen improvements in the quality of the less complex EAs prepared by the Regions and NMSS divisions. Based on this improvement, EPAB proposes to modify the EA review requirements as follows:

1. EAs for simple licensing actions will no longer require EPAB review. Examples of simple licensing actions include minor changes to existing facilities or administrative type actions which do not qualify for a categorical exclusion. EPAB will be available for consultation on simple EAs and will review as requested. Section 3.3 of NUREG-1748 provides further information on simple EAs.
2. EAs for complex licensing actions will be prepared by EPAB if requested via Technical Assistance Request. Complex EAs constitute significant changes (significant new construction) to existing facilities, periodic license renewals, approval of decommissioning plans involving significant disturbances to the environment, or approval of license termination plans for reactor decommissioning. EPAB will provide guidance to determine whether a simple or complex EA is required.

All other guidance in NUREG-1748 and previous memorandum remains valid. EPAB will also be available to assist with consultation activities and categorical exclusion determinations. EPAB is also suggesting that review of the Regional EAs be incorporated into the Regional Integrated Material Performance evaluation Program (IMPEP) reviews. EPAB staff will work with the Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety, the Office of State and Tribal Programs, and the Regions to develop the process, guidance, and criteria for the Regional IMPEP. Finally, EPAB recommends that Regional and NMSS division staff that prepare EAs periodically take refresher training. EPAB has developed a new course that will be offered through the Professional Development Center once a year. Alternatively, if any of the regions or divisions want refresher training on EA preparation, please contact Scott Flanders to arrange a training session.

CONTACT: Scott Flanders, NMSS/DWM/EPAB
(301) 415-6717

Those on Attached List:

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Robert C. Pierson, Director
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety
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DATE	2/24/04	2/26/04	3/15/04	3/8/04	3/16/04	3/ 19 /04

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