

May 20, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: John T. Larkins, Executive Director  
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards

FROM: Carl J. Paperiello, Director/**RA**/  
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

SUBJECT: ACRS ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Your letter dated April 26, 2004, stated that the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS or the Committee) agreed to assist the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES), in assessing the quality and effectiveness of the NRC's research programs. As you know, we have undertaken an initiative to develop a quality metric for our research as part of our overall program to measure and continually improve the performance of the RES staff. We appreciate the Committee's willingness to support our initiative.

I understand that ACRS has decided to initially review two specific projects to enable the Committee to further develop and refine its review process. Specifically, those projects are sump blockage research and computer program improvements to the MELCOR Accident Consequence Code System (MACCS). As you are no doubt aware, those specific projects represent important aspects of our overall research program, and I believe ACRS has chosen wisely.

The cognizant RES staff have already engaged with the ACRS staff and are providing the relevant documentation for the Committee's review. Our management lead for this initiative is Mr. Michael E. Mayfield, Director of the RES Division of Engineering Technology. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Mayfield or me regarding this important activity.

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Publicly Available? (Y or N) Yes DATE OF RELEASE TO PUBLIC \_\_\_\_\_ SENSITIVE? NO

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