



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, DC 20555-0001 E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>

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**REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN NILS J. DIAZ,
UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
at the
NRC ANNUAL DIVERSITY DAY CELEBRATION
10:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY
JULY 14, 2004
NRC AUDITORIUM**

Good morning, and welcome to NRC's annual observance of Diversity Day. Commissioner McGaffigan, Commissioner Merrifield, and I are pleased to join you this morning and to participate in this annual agency event.

Before I proceed further this morning, I want to acknowledge the many individuals and organizations that have come together to make this day possible. The Commission is pleased to welcome Navy Captain R. Sydney Abernathy III, our keynote speaker; Mr. Jack Julius, who will be performing a little magic for us later in the program; Ms. Kris Gamble of 99.5 FM Radio, who will serve as our master of ceremonies for the entertainment segments of the program this afternoon; and the various musicians, professional societies, arts and craft vendors, and food vendors who will be here either on the Green or in the Exhibit Area throughout the day. In addition, we appreciate the presence of representatives of the State of Maryland and the Government of Montgomery County as well as the embassies of Japan, Kenya, and Thailand. Our special thanks also go to the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, which organizes and sponsors this event every year, and to the Diversity Day Planning Group that worked out all the details of our program today.

Our purpose this morning is to take time out from our normal activities to appreciate the varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds, perspectives, customs, and cuisines of our workplace colleagues; to recognize the unique American tapestry that the presence of many cultures, languages, and peoples on

this land has woven over the course of time; and to acknowledge the extraordinary strength that diversity can bring to any organized activity whether that activity takes place at the neighborhood, community, State, or national levels. Diversity Day encompasses each one of us at the NRC not only because we each have our own particular cultural and ethnic background to value and share with others, but also because we all work together to achieve common goals that are important to our fellow citizens and to the Nation as a whole. This fundamental idea that diversity and unity are compatible with each other is reflected in the theme for today's event - "Diversity: United We Stand."

The belief that diversity and unity can mutually coexist is one of the distinguishing characteristics of modern America. Although nearly every modern society is experiencing significant increases in the diversity of their populations as a result of the growth of the global economy, the spread of information technology, and increasing ease of international travel, few modern societies understand diversity as a virtue. In 21st century America, by contrast, diversity is celebrated and perceived to be an inherent part of the definition of who we are as a people. In fact, today the United States may very well be the most diverse society on the planet. And we are continuing to become more diverse every day.

The agency today is far more diverse than it was in 1975 at the time it was created, and our diversity will continue to grow. We are a small, tightly organized, and highly skilled organization that has succeeded in what we do in part because we have learned to rely upon each other in carrying out our individual responsibilities. We have a common purpose -- protection of the public health and safety; common perceptions -- that each of us, every day, contributes to the achievement of agency objectives; shared experiences -- forging a high quality regulatory program that is recognized as such around the world; and commitment to individual worth -- evidenced by the mutual respect we have for each other in what we do and who we are. I believe that diversity has strengthened the NRC and will continue to do so as long as we continue to maintain our mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation of each other; in other words, as long as the spirit of Diversity Day that we celebrate and enjoy today remains with us every day in all our interactions in the NRC work environment.

One of the ways we seek to improve our performance as a diverse organization is to share experiences with other agencies of the Federal Government. In that regard, we are very fortunate to

have with us this morning Captain R. Sydney Abernethy, III, of the United States Navy. Captain Abernethy is a native of Baltimore and grew up in Annapolis, where he graduated from the Naval Academy in 1981. He has had a variety of interesting assignments and experiences in the Navy; for example, he served three six-month deployments to Antarctica in support of scientific research; flew air reconnaissance missions out of Guam and in support of the Seventh Fleet; served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs in the Intelligence Directorate; participated in Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in the early 1990's; and served on board the USS John C. Stennis during its deployment to the Arabian Gulf in 1999. He is currently serving as the Special Assistant for Minority Affairs to the Chief of Naval Personnel. He is going to share with us some of the Navy's experience with diversity and diversity management and perhaps some of his personal experiences as a Naval Officer. Please join me in welcoming our guest speaker, Navy Captain R. Sydney Abernethy, III.