

December 16, 2004

Dr. Mario V. Bonaca, Chairman  
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY  
COMMISSION'S SAFETY RESEARCH PROGRAM

Dear Dr. Bonaca:

This letter provides a response by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff to the recommendations in the 2003 report of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) on the NRC's Safety Research Program, NUREG-1635, Volume 5.

The staff appreciates the ACRS's evaluation of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research's (RES) work related to future reactor designs. Although we did not respond formally to the ACRS's recommendations at the time the report was issued, the presentations to the Committee made subsequently by the staff were heavily influenced by those recommendations. In addition, those recommendations were carefully and thoroughly taken into consideration, within the parameters established by the Commission, as RES developed its program plans and budgets for FY 2004 and beyond.

I would like to thank the ACRS for its comprehensive and candid assessments of RES's programs, and look forward to future interactions on these important issues.

Sincerely,

***/RA Martin J. Virgilio Acting for/***

Luis A. Reyes  
Executive Director  
for Operations

cc: Chairman Diaz  
Commissioner McGaffigan  
Commissioner Merrifield  
SECY

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