

April 12, 2005

David Lochbaum  
Nuclear Safety Engineer  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
1707 H Street NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Lochbaum:

On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your February 15, 2005, letter concerning a report by the NRC's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) titled "System Evaluation of the Integrated Personnel Security System" (OIG-05-A-08). Your letter recommended that NRC adopt the approach used in writing this report as a model of how certain information pertaining to security inspections can be made available to the public without revealing sensitive safeguards information.

The NRC has a long-standing goal of openness, enhancing public confidence in our process by providing access to the information used to make regulatory decisions. NRC remains one of the most open Federal agencies, making available to the public hundreds of thousands of documents. At the same time, the NRC must ensure that sensitive information regarding security for nuclear facilities and nuclear materials does not fall into the hands of those who wish to do harm.

The Commission wants to ensure that the NRC is striking the right balance between making information publicly available and withholding information for homeland security reasons. As a result, the Commission has decided to establish an internal task force to review classification of information (e.g., classified, safeguards, and sensitive unclassified information that should be withheld from public disclosure under a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption). Representatives of this task force will interact with appropriate members of the Executive Branch to confirm the NRC interpretation and practices for protection of the information.

The NRC recognizes the importance of making inspection findings available to the public. To accomplish this while protecting sensitive information, we plan to publish reports of inspection findings, including force-on-force exercises, in summary form each year, beginning in 2006. This information will allow the reader to gauge the success of the security programs at NRC-licensed facilities in general, engage in meaningful discussion with the NRC on these matters, and more fully understand the status of nuclear power plant security, without disclosing details that could be exploited in planning or executing attacks.

Your interest in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Roy P. Zimmerman, Director  
Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response

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Roy P. Zimmerman, Director  
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