

February 15, 2006

The Honorable George V. Voinovich
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate Change, and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Commission, I am pleased to inform you of the public release of the results of NRC's 2005 Safety Culture and Climate Survey. The survey was the latest in a series of three conducted by the NRC's Office of Inspector General (OIG), with assistance from a contractor research firm, to gain a better understanding of NRC's internal safety culture and climate. Previous safety culture surveys were done in 1998 and 2002. The complete report of the results for 2005 is available at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/insp-gen/2006>, and the NRC's Inspector General will be transmitting printed copies of the report to Congress shortly.

According to the latest survey results, which reflect a 70 percent participation rate, the NRC improved in essentially all areas compared to the 2002 survey, with the largest gains in communication, mission and strategic planning, employee engagement, recruiting, developing and retaining staff, and management leadership. In the experience of the research firm, this degree of improvement between surveys is rare. The improvement reflects the commitment of the Commission and the staff to improve communications, accountability, and dedication to our strategic objectives. Areas needing continued improvement include employee workload and stress, knowledge transfer from staff who are retiring, and use of the Differing Professional Opinion (DPO) Program. Compared to 1998, the NRC has improved in 17 categories, including the DPO Program, and the NRC's scores in most categories are more favorable than the norms developed by the research firm for purposes of comparison.

The results of the 2005 survey reflect the actions taken by the agency to improve in all areas important to the agency mission and to the continuing development of our staff. These actions included reinforcing the importance of the agency's safety mission, improving internal communications, improving the handling of employee concerns, and sharpening management and leadership skills. The NRC will take appropriate actions to address the results of the 2005 survey. The survey contractor has completed "Results to Action" workshops to train the NRC staff to analyze the data and develop office-specific action plans. In addition, a management team will determine whether there are any agency-wide areas that need additional attention.

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If you have any questions about the 2005 Safety Culture and Climate Survey, please contact me or the NRC's Inspector General.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Nils J. Diaz

cc: Senator Thomas R. Carper

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable George V. Voinovich
Chairman, Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate Change, and Nuclear Safety
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator Thomas R. Carper

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator James M. Jeffords

The Honorable Ralph M. Hall
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Representative Rick Boucher

The Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Representative John D. Dingell

The Honorable David L. Hobson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
cc: Representative Peter J. Visclosky

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
cc: Senator Harry Reid