Opening Remarks

Good evening. My name is Steven Orth, and I am a representative of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I am the team leader of the team that inspects the Radiation Safety Programs at the Nuclear Power Plants in the Region. I have been working for the NRC for about 15 years and have been involved in the emergency preparedness and radiation safety inspection areas. Here with me today, are three additional representatives –

Mr. Nick Shah, our Sr. Resident Inspector at the Braidwood Facility

Mr. Roland Lickus, our State Liaison Officer and

Ms. Viktoria Mitlyng, one of our Public Affairs Officers.

Mr. Cosgrove invited us to participate this evening to describe our activities in response to the tritium contamination from the Braidwood Nuclear Plant and to answer questions that you may have about the NRC and our response to the contamination. We are willing to answer questions both during and after the meeting. We understand that some people may feel uncomfortable raising questions in a public forum, so we plan to stay after the meeting to answer any additional questions.

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Let me begin with a general description of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is the Federal Agency that regulates the civilian use of radioactive materials as authorized by the Atomic Energy Act and the Energy Reorganization Act. Under that authority, our mission is to ensure the safe use of radioactive material and to protect public health and safety and the environment. We accomplish this through licensing and inspecting the use of radioactive material in the United States, which includes medical uses, industrial uses, and nuclear power plants. In some cases, we have given certain authorities to the States, as is the case in Illinois. However, the NRC continues to hold the authority for all of the Nuclear Power Plants in the U.S.

As part of the license to operate a Nuclear Power Plant, the licensee, in this case EXELON, holds the primary responsibility for operating the plant safety and in accordance with the operating license. We have requirements that the licensee provides reports of certain plant operations, which includes the annual report of radioactive releases from the site. We also have requirements that the licensee notifies the NRC of certain problems so that we may focus our inspections in the areas that may need additional attention.

We have an inspection program that verifies that the licensee is meeting those requirements. We conduct essentially two types of inspections – Resident Inspections and Specialist inspections. Our Resident Inspectors, for example Mr. Shah, provides a day-to-day inspection of activities at the Nuclear Power plant. We also have specialist inspectors who perform inspections in specific areas that include engineering, emergency preparedness, and radiation safety. In the Radiation Safety area, we routinely perform 3 - 5 inspections each year at a plant like Braidwood.

Our baseline inspection program looks at a sample of activities that are uniform at every facility. We use that sample to verify the licensee's compliance with our requirements and to ensure that the licensee corrects issues that are identified.

NRC requirements allow our licensee's, including Nuclear Power Plants, to release radioactivity into the environment. We require that the releases be controlled and monitored and that the resulting radiation doses be below the limits that we have established.

In the case of Braidwood, we are concerned that there has been radioactive material found in areas where it was not intended to be. We have responded to this issue. Our resident inspector began verifying the adequacy of the licensee's actions immediately, and we dispatched a senior radiation specialist from the Region III office to assist him. Our primary focus has been to ensure that the licensee has taken the appropriate actions to identify the radioactive contamination and to ensure that the public is safe. We have made independent measurements and have taken independent samples to verify that the licensee's reports are accurate. We have also verified that the licensee has stopped liquid radioactive releases, until the licensee can ensure that the problems have been resolved.

We have documented our initial review in an inspection report that was issued this week, which is available to the public. Our inspection has not concluded, and you will not find NRC conclusions in that report. We are continuing to inspect and evaluate this issue, and we will be providing an additional report when our review is completed.

Based on our current results, we can assure you that the contamination, although in locations not originally intended, does not present a hazard to public health and safety.

Closing Comments

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you this evening and hope that I have provided you answers to your questions. We have taken aggressive actions in response to the issues at Braidwood, and the levels that we have seen to date do not represent a hazard to the public. . We have a current inspection report that we've issued and will have another report when we reach our conclusions on this issue. I take my work with the NRC very personally and very seriously, and I want to express our commitment to protecting your safety. We will continue to ensure you that our inspections and any additional actions are with that focus