

-NRR

From: Paul Clifford
To: Frank Akstulewicz; Jared Wermiel } *NRR*
Date: 1/13/06 9:57AM
Subject: Fwd: News to Me

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Disturbing news from ANL. See ANL news bulletin material below.....I will stay abreast of this situation and keep you informed.

This will most likely impact revising LOCA criteria and rulemaking. If suspension of the hot cells turns out to be the final plan at ANL, we should consider a short-term plan including communications to the industry and possibly interim criteria.

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Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells . After the OA and Price-Anderson Amendments Act assessments of last year, I directed that all programmatic work in our Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells be suspended, and I requested a detailed business plan for the continued (future) operations of our hot cells. My original intent was to re-start programmatic work once we could credibly claim that we had addressed all of the DOE's concerns, on the assumption that there is in fact also a credible business plan for moving forward. It turns out that there is no credible business plan, i.e., hot cell work can only continue if the lab chooses to subsidize that work. In my view, such subsidies are unjustifiable, and for this reason, I have directed that the Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells no longer be used for programmatic work. This course of action will also substantially lower the lab's safety risks. We are now in the process of working out alternate off-site arrangements for carrying out the programmatic work that will now no longer be done in our hot cells.

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"Nuclear Facilities." According to DOE regulations, locations that have more than a certain well-defined threshold amount of radioactive materials must be regarded as "nuclear facilities." Argonne has a substantial number of such "facilities," mostly due to nuclear materials that are the remnants of our extensive nuclear reactor work of more than a decade ago. I have directed that all such materials be transported (in an appropriately safe manner) to the Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells; thus, while the hot cells will no longer be used for programmatic work, they will be used as a very safe interim storage location until we can get these nuclear materials off site. Once the lab has removed all such materials, these hot cells can then be fully shut down.