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**From:** Harold Scott  
**To:** Samuel Lee  
**Date:** 1/20/06 8:31AM  
**Subject:** "D" note on Unavailability of Argonne facility

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Here is the final version we sent to Farouk yesterday based on his feedback. Farouk opened it but we don't know if he forwarded to you.

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**Unavailability of Argonne Facility Could Threaten Cooperative Program with Industry on Criteria for LOCA and Spent Fuel Casks.**

The NRC staff have been informed of the potential loss of use of a hot cell facility at a DOE laboratory (Argonne) that is being used for NRC programmatic work. Having received the Chairman's approval (12/08/05), the staff issued a new three-year statement of work for services provided by Argonne National Laboratory to complete research on high-burnup fuel with advanced cladding materials. This work supports rulemaking-related activities (10CFR50.46b LOCA criteria) in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and licensing activities (casks for spent fuel) in the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards. This work is being done in cooperation with EPRI, Framatome, Westinghouse, and DOE-NE.

Some of the work on irradiated fuel rods needs to be performed in the Alpha Gamma Hot Cell Facility (AGHCF) at Argonne. Although it was announced that the AGHCF will no longer be available for programmatic work, the facility will remain open for other activities. NRC staff are attempting to communicate with DOE and ANL to determine the conditions under which the NRC sponsored work can continue in the AGHCF. We are also looking at contingency plans using other facilities, although that would result in substantial delays in anticipated regulatory activities.

**CC:** Ralph Meyer; Sher Bahadur

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