

June 29, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
Commissioner Jaczko
Commissioner Lyons

FROM: Luis A. Reyes */RA/*
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: NRC INTERIM PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN

The purpose of this memorandum is to forward you for your review and approval the United States (U.S.) Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Interim Pandemic Response Plan. This Plan represents a high-level agency-wide plan which, if approved in whole, or in part, by the Commission, will be followed by the development of action plans and resource estimates of the remaining preparedness activities identified in the Plan. Once the action plans and resource estimates are completed, the staff plans to submit this information to the Commission for information.

On November 1, 2005, President George W. Bush announced the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* and directed all Federal departments and agencies to begin internal planning to ensure readiness in the event of an influenza pandemic. At the direction of the Commission, and further guidance provided by Commissioner Merrifield, I established the Pandemic Task Group, led by Jacqueline E. Silber, Deputy Executive Director for Information Services and Administration and Chief Information Officer, to begin agency planning.

In support of the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, the Homeland Security Council, in May 2006, released the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, which provides planning assumptions and guidance to departments and agencies for addressing an operational approach to employee safety, continuity of essential functions, and communication with stakeholders in their planning for pandemic influenza. The Department of Homeland Security provided detailed guidelines for pandemic planning in a memorandum dated March 1, 2006, issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Office of National Security Coordination. This guideline addressed elements of FEMA's Federal

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Preparedness Circular (FPC) 65, "Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations (COOP)," such as essential functions, delegations of authority, orders of succession, human capital, reconstitution, and so forth, to be applied toward building the framework of a plan for responding to a pandemic.

The Task Group developed the NRC Interim Pandemic Response Plan based on the guidelines provided by the *Implementation Plan* and the FEMA memorandum. In addition, the staff incorporated insights gleaned from the NRC Pandemic Flu Workshop held on April 27, 2006, where representatives of the NRC, other Federal agencies, State agencies, and the utility industry discussed issues affecting (1) plant operation and security that can be anticipated from a rapidly spreading pandemic and (2) actions that the NRC may need to take on an emergency basis to assure that safety, security, emergency response capability, and reliable electric production are all maintained.

The NRC COOP Plan provides for continuity of the most essential functions for up to 30 days during and after natural or man-made emergencies that are expected to occur at fairly well defined times and places. The NRC Pandemic Response Plan is intended to complement the COOP Plan and provide continuity for a wider set of operations during a longer period in response to a pandemic that could present a more persistent, widespread, and prolonged assault, which may grow and fade across the Nation over a period of many months before finally dying out.

Because of the large uncertainty about how and when a pandemic could affect the U.S., the staff designed the Plan to be flexible, to accommodate changes brought on by a pandemic, and to enable rapid preparations and response. The pandemic threat is constantly evolving as is our level of preparedness. Therefore, the staff will continue to review and revise this Plan on a continual basis, as appropriate, to reflect changes in NRC's understanding of the threat and the state of relevant response capabilities and technologies.

In closing, the Interim Pandemic Response Plan constitutes a high-level agency-wide plan and represents a first significant step towards ensuring readiness for a potential pandemic. NRC's readiness to face a pandemic now depends on remaining work to be performed at the Office and Regional levels, as identified in the Plan, to complete the preparations. Several specific areas that may be of particular interest to the Commission include developing infrastructure to support extended telecommuting, developing and executing training and exercises, having an accountability process which keeps track of the status of the staff (their availability, health conditions, etc), promoting practice of hand hygiene and other social distancing measures, maintaining building cleanliness and access control, and coordination of Office-specific procedures along with upkeep of the main Plan. As indicated in the June 2, 2006, memorandum to the Chairman regarding the Fiscal Year 2008 budget proposal, the budget does not include resources for future agency actions for response to a pandemic. At this time, sufficient information is not available to make resource estimates. Once the Commission

The Commissioners

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approves the Plan, in whole, or in part, the staff will develop action plans, resource estimates related to the action plans and required reallocation of available resources, and submit this to the Commission for information.

Similar to the agency's COOP Plan, the Pandemic Response Plan represents strategy for continuity of operations at the NRC and should not be released to the public, consistent with how we treat COOP information. This document is therefore designated as sensitive internal information.

SECY, please track.

Enclosures:

1. Transmittal Memorandum from Jacqueline E. Silber to Luis A. Reyes
2. NRC Interim Pandemic Response Plan

cc: SECY
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