

February 26, 2007

Mr. Eric J. Epstein
TMI-Alert Chairman
4100 Hillsdale Road
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17112

Dear Mr. Epstein:

I am responding to your letter of October 19, 2005, in which you submitted a petition for rulemaking. The petition docketed as PRM-50-81, requests that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) amend its regulations to codify criteria in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 1986 Guidance Memorandum (GM) EV-2, "Protective Actions for School Children," into the NRC's emergency planning regulations in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 50. You state that without such codification, children in Pennsylvania will not have preplanned evacuation capabilities in the event of an emergency.

The Commission is denying your petition because it does not provide any new information that was not previously considered in denying an earlier petition submitted by Mr. Lawrence T. Christian (PRM-50-79), which requested that the emergency planning regulations be amended to ensure that all day care centers and nursery schools in the vicinity of nuclear power facilities are properly protected during a radiological emergency. You submitted an enclosure to PRM-50-81, a copy of a Differing Professional Opinion (DPO) by a member of the NRC staff. This DPO focused on the adequacy of preplanned evacuation resources and preplanned relocation centers for day care centers and nursery schools within the Commonwealth and on whether the Commonwealth and Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/FEMA have failed to comply with DHS/FEMA guidance. Your proposed remedy is for the NRC to incorporate the criteria in GM EV-2 into its emergency planning regulations to grant the petition for rulemaking (PRM-50-79), and to implement the 120-day clock provisions of 10 CFR 50.54(s)(2) while the rulemaking is in progress. The DPO raises issues about local implementation of requirements and guidance which would not be resolved by your proposal that the GM EV-2 criteria be incorporated into NRC regulations. GM EV-2 is a guidance document developed by FEMA and utilized by DHS, which has the primary responsibility for assessing the adequacy of offsite emergency preparedness. NRC bases its own findings in part on a review of DHS's findings and determinations as to whether State and local emergency plans are adequate and whether there is reasonable assurance that they can be implemented.

As part of the denial of PRM-50-79, the Commission directed the staff to undertake several actions to further assess these implementation questions and to provide appropriate recommendations for improvement. In response to this direction, the NRC staff met with DHS and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency to obtain information relevant to local implementation. Pennsylvania officials described a comprehensive program, mandated by Pennsylvania law for licensed day care facilities that substantially enhances the existing emergency preparedness posture that was previously found by DHS to provide reasonable assurance that adequate protective measures can and will be taken for the public, including

children in day care facilities. The staff provided the Commission the results of this assessment in a Commission paper dated May 4, 2006 (SECY-06-0101, ML060760586). The staff found no sufficient basis to question the adequacy of DHS findings regarding reasonable assurance. The staff believes the DHS findings are consistent with the planning standards of 10 CFR § 50.47(b) and the existing memorandum of understanding between NRC and DHS.

The Commonwealth has undertaken significant recent efforts to ensure that day care facilities have arrangements to implement adequate protective measures for their charges. The Commonwealth enacted a new law in 2004 that directed these facilities to develop and implement all-hazards emergency preparedness as a condition of their licensing. The day care facility licensing authority has promulgated supporting regulations and a "Day Care Facilities Emergency Planning Guide" was distributed to each licensed day care facility. At this time, all 90 licensed day care facilities within the Three Mile Island (TMI) emergency planning zone have completed, submitted, and implemented their facility plans. The above recent actions have provided additional assurance that adequate protective measures can be taken, and added clarity to the affected parties' roles and responsibilities.

The DPO was carefully considered in accordance with NRC procedures included in Management Directive 10.159, "The NRC Differing Professional Opinions Program." As a result of this evaluation, NRC staff concluded that DHS has arrived at a defensible finding of reasonable assurance that children at day care facilities and nursery schools would be evacuated in the event of a radiological emergency at a power plant in the Commonwealth. The NRC also concluded that the DHS finding is consistent with the relevant regulations and guidance documents as well as legal implementation of Federal, State, and local requirements. A summary of the DPO decision is available on the NRC public web site <http://www.nrc.gov>.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Annette L. Vietti-Cook

Enclosure:
Federal Register Notice of
Denial of Petition for Rulemaking

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

10 CFR Part 50

[Docket No. PRM-50-81]

Mr. Eric Epstein; Denial of Petition for Rulemaking

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

ACTION: Denial of petition for rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The NRC is denying a petition for rulemaking (PRM) submitted by Mr. Eric Epstein on October 19, 2005. The petition, docketed as PRM-50-81, requests that NRC codify criteria in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)¹ 1986 Guidance Memorandum (GM) EV-2, "Protective Actions for School Children," into NRC's emergency planning regulations. The petitioner believes that this action is necessary to provide preplanned emergency evacuation capabilities for children in Pennsylvania. The NRC is denying PRM-50-81 because it does not provide significant new information that was not previously considered in denying an earlier petition, PRM-50-79, submitted by Mr. Lawrence T. Christian, which requested that the Commission amend its emergency planning regulations to ensure that all day care centers and nursery schools in the vicinity of nuclear power facilities are properly protected in the event of a radiological emergency.

ADDRESSES: Publicly available documents related to this petition, including the petition for rulemaking and the NRC's letter of denial to the petitioner may be viewed electronically on public computers in the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), 01 F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. The PDR reproduction contractor will copy documents for a fee. Selected documents, including comments, may be viewed and downloaded electronically via the NRC rulemaking web site at <http://ruleforum.llnl.gov>. Publicly

¹ Now part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

available documents created or received at the NRC after November 1, 1999, are also available electronically at the NRC's Electronic Reading Room at

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. From this site, the public can gain entry into the NRC's Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS), which provides text and image files of NRC's public documents. If you do not have access to ADAMS or if there are problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, contact the PDR reference staff at (800) 387-4209, (301) 415-4737 or by e-mail to pdr@nrc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lee Banic, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, NRC, Washington, DC 20555-0001, telephone (301) 415-2771, email mjb@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Petition

On March 27, 2006, the NRC docketed a petition for rulemaking submitted under 10 CFR 2.802 by Mr. Eric Epstein on October 19, 2005. The petitioner requested that NRC amend its regulations to codify criteria in the FEMA 1986 GM EV-2 into NRC's emergency planning regulations (10 CFR Part 50). The petitioner believes that this action is necessary to provide preplanned emergency evacuation capabilities for children in Pennsylvania. In support of his petition, Mr. Epstein cited excerpts from an enclosure to his petition, an unsigned, undated document that he represents as a differing professional opinion (DPO) submitted by a member of the NRC staff.² This DPO focused on the adequacy of preplanned evacuation

² The Commission acknowledges that such a DPO was submitted. This DPO was processed in accordance with NRC procedures included in Management Directive 10.159, "The NRC Differing Professional Opinions Program." On June 14, 2006, the Director, Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR), issued a decision that concluded that DHS has arrived at a defensible finding of reasonable assurance that children at day care facilities and nursery schools would be evacuated in the event of a radiological emergency at a power plant in the Commonwealth. The NSIR Director also concluded that the DHS finding is consistent with the relevant regulations and guidance documents as well as legal implementation of Federal, State, and local requirements. A summary of the DPO decision is available on the NRC public web site <http://www.nrc.gov>.

resources and preplanned relocation centers for day care centers and nursery schools within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (“Commonwealth”) and on whether the Commonwealth and Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/FEMA have failed to comply with DHS/FEMA guidance.

Summary of Original Petition PRM-50-79 and Basis for Denial

On September 4, 2002, NRC received a petition for rulemaking submitted by Mr. Lawrence T. Christian and 3,000 co-signers. The petition was docketed on September 23, 2002, and assigned Docket No. PRM-50-79. The petition requested that NRC amend its regulations regarding offsite State and local government emergency plans for nuclear power plants to ensure that all day care centers and nursery schools in the vicinity of nuclear power facilities are properly protected during a radiological emergency.

The Commission denied the petition in a document published in the *Federal Register* on December 19, 2005 (70 FR 75085). The petition was denied on the basis that current NRC requirements and NRC and DHS guidance reasonably assure adequate protection of all members of the public, including children attending day care centers and nursery schools, in the event of a nuclear power plant incident. NRC stated in its denial that many of the specific requests of petition PRM-50-79 either are already covered by regulations or guidance documents (including GM EV-2) or are inappropriate for inclusion in NRC regulations owing to their very prescriptive nature.

The Commission also determined that the petition and information obtained during the review of the petition, raised questions about local implementation of relevant requirements and guidelines. Accordingly, the Commission directed the NRC staff to undertake several actions to further assess these implementation questions and to provide appropriate recommendations for improvement (staff requirements memorandum (SRM) dated October 26, 2005, available in the

Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS) No. ML052990321). In response to this direction, the NRC staff met with DHS and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency to obtain information relevant to local implementation. Pennsylvania officials described a comprehensive program, mandated by Pennsylvania law, for licensed day care facilities that substantially enhances the existing emergency preparedness posture that was previously found by DHS to provide reasonable assurance that adequate protective measures will be taken for the public, including children in day care facilities.

The NRC staff provided the Commission the results of this assessment and other related initiatives in a Commission paper dated May 4, 2006 (SECY-06-0101; ML060760586). The staff found no sufficient basis to question the adequacy of DHS findings regarding reasonable assurance. The staff believes the DHS findings are consistent with the planning standards of 10 CFR 50.47(b) and the existing memorandum of understanding between NRC and DHS. The staff also included a recommendation to republish the December 19, 2005, *Federal Register* Notice with revisions to correct factual errors and clarify NRC's regulatory positions and bases in the petition denial. This recommendation afforded the Commission an opportunity to reconsider its earlier denial of the petition. The Commission found no basis for changing its earlier denial, and in an SRM dated June 21, 2006 (ML061720324), the Commission directed the staff to publish the amended *Federal Register* Notice. The amended notice was published on August 7, 2006 (71 FR 44593).

Reasons for Denial

The Commission is denying the petition for the following reasons. The petition does not provide significant new information or arguments that were not previously considered by the Commission in denying PRM-50-79. As stated above, the petition relies upon a DPO, which

