

August 9, 2007

Mr. Anthony R. Pietrangelo, Vice President
Regulatory Affairs
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-3708

SUBJECT: STATE-OF-THE-ART REACTOR CONSEQUENCE ANALYSIS (SOARCA)

Dear Mr. Pietrangelo:

This letter responds to your letter dated July 27, 2007, regarding the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) State-of-the-Art Reactor Consequence Analysis (SOARCA) project. In it you reiterated the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) support for the SOARCA project and indicated that NEI would be happy to meet with the NRC to discuss the industry's information needs regarding the project.

The NRC is pursuing the SOARCA project to develop a realistic estimate of the potential effects a nuclear power plant accident would have on the public, where low-likelihood scenarios could release radioactive material into the environment and potentially cause off-site consequences. We are currently in the first phase of the project and are evaluating the Peach Bottom and Surry plants. Furthermore, we are continuing to solicit additional licensees to participate in the project and encourage all stakeholders to participate as well.

Your letter references a previous Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) letter dated November 29, 2006, in which NEI provided the NRC with a list of questions on this project. In addition, you indicated that licensees seem to be reluctant to commit the resources needed to support this project because there are outstanding questions in areas such as accident frequency truncation limits, scenario selection, latent health effects, and economic impacts. It also states that there are outstanding questions regarding what review rights licensees will have with respect to the NRC analysis being conducted for their plants.

Many of your questions and concerns were discussed during the staff's public meeting with the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards on July 10, 2007, and we will continue to address these issues in future public meetings with stakeholders. In addition, a web site on the SOARCA project will be released in the very near future, and will include a version of the project plan, which will also address many of your questions and concerns.

We look forward to your continued involvement in this important project.

Sincerely,

/RA/ Mike Johnson for

Brian W. Sheron, Director
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

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