

April 1, 2008

Dr. William J. Shack, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

SUBJECT: CABLE RESPONSE TO LIVE FIRE TESTING AND FIRE MODEL
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Dear Dr. Shack:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter, dated February 28, 2008, regarding the NRC's Cable Response to Live Fire (CAROLFIRE) Testing and Fire Model Improvement Program. In that letter, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) recommended that the NRC proceed with publishing the three-volume NUREG/CR-6931 report, entitled "Cable Response to Live Fire (CAROLFIRE)," including the related electronic data sets. ACRS also recommended that the staff continue to analyze the data and develop guidance for its future use.

As noted in your letter, the CAROLFIRE testing consisted of 78 well-controlled, small-scale, cable tests and 18 larger-scale open-burn, integral tests. Those tests were designed to complete and complement previous testing by providing data to elucidate the regulatory issues involved in the "Bin-2" items noted in Revision 1 of NRC Regulatory Issue Summary (RIS) 04-003, "Risk-Informed Approach for Post-Fire Safe-Shutdown Circuit Inspections," dated December 29, 2004, and improve the ability of fire models to predict cable responses to fire damage. In addition, as noted in your letter, the extensive data sets developed through CAROLFIRE will help analysts determine the likelihood and timing of various cable failure modes.

We very much appreciate the Committee's statement that the CAROLFIRE project has provided valuable data regarding cable fires, and that it is an important step in the staff's efforts to decrease the uncertainty in fire model results. We intend to follow the ACRS recommendations to publish the CAROLFIRE volumes, and to continue analyzing the CAROLFIRE test data and develop guidance regarding future use of the results. We plan to submit all three volumes for publication before the end of March, 2008. We look forward to future interactions with you as we keep the ACRS apprised of our progress.

Sincerely,

/RA Martin J. Virgilio For/

Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Chairman Klein
Commissioner Jaczko
Commissioner Lyons
Commissioner Svinicki
SECY

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L. Reyes, EDO M. Virgilio, DEDMRT B. Mallett, DEDR D. Ash, DEDIS/CIO V. Ordaz, AO ACRS r/f
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