Update
Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Review of DOE Regulatory Processes for the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant

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Outline

- Who is the NRC?
- What is the NRC's task?
- Scope of review
- How did NRC conduct its review?
- Next steps
- Summary

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Who is the NRC?

- Independent regulatory agency
- Separate from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
- NRC's mission is to license and regulate civilian use of radioactive material
  - To ensure adequate protection of public health and safety
  - To promote common defense and security
  - To protect the environment
- NRC does not have statutory authority to license or otherwise regulate DOE's activities at the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant

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What Is NRC's Task?

- NRC was directed to conduct a review
  - The Report for the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2008 states:

"In cooperation with the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is directed to review the regulatory processes of the Department for the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant and report its assessment and recommendations to the Secretary of Energy and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations within 180 days of enactment."

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Scope of Review

- Compared DOE and NRC legislative mandates and strategic plans
- Reviewed DOE policies, regulations, orders, guidance, and programs and practices
  - Relative to NRC's regulatory framework
- Described general scope in letter to Congress, March 21, 2008

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Scope of Review (continued)

- Review was limited
  - Safety and environmental programs and activities
- Review was not
  - A detailed design or license review
  - A detailed audit of implementation of DOE's requirements
  - An assessment of security or vulnerability
- NRC did not review
  - Security
  - Material control and accounting
  - Emergency planning
  - Management of plant output
  - Decommissioning

How Did NRC Conduct Its Review?

- Reviewed relevant laws, legal constraints (Tri-Party Agreement), strategic plan, regulations, guidance

- Reviewed WTP programs from standpoint of NRC's NUREG-1520, *Standard Review Plan for the Review of a License Application for a Fuel Cycle Facility*:
  - Safety analysis
  - Radiation safety
  - Nuclear criticality safety
  - Chemical process safety
  - Fire safety
  - Environmental protection
  - Management measures (e.g., maintenance, training, quality assurance)
  - Inspection during construction and operations
  - Enforcement
  - Allegations
  - Risk assessment and safety goals

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How Did NRC Conduct Its Review? (continued)

- WTP site visits
  - DOE provided overview on regulatory approach
- Interviews
  - DOE and BNI staff
  - State of Washington (Ecology and Health Depts)
  - Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
  - DOE Health, Safety and Security
  - Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- Document reviews
  - Public and nonpublic documents

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How Did NRC Conduct Its Review? (continued)

- Communication with other stakeholders
  - Tribes
  - Hanford Advisory Board and Tank Waste Committee
  - Tri-Cities public meeting (meeting summary available)
- Check portions of report for factual accuracy

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Next Steps

- Complete report
- Provide report to Congress by June 23
- Public meeting to discuss contents of report
  - July 15
  - Location – Tri-Cities, Seattle, etc.?

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Summary

- NRC was directed by Congress to complete a review of DOE's regulatory processes at the Hanford WTP
- NRC conducted review through interviews, site visits, and document reviews
- NRC is now finalizing the report of its independent review
- NRC will keep stakeholders informed