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NRC CHAIRMAN TAKES STEPS TOWARD GREATER COMMISSION OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Gregory B. Jaczko today announced he plans to begin immediately releasing his votes to the public, moving away from the Commission's long-standing tradition of withholding that information until action on issues is completed.

"I believe this will give the public a better understanding of how the Commission makes decisions. Public discussions of our deliberations are appropriate and beneficial," said Jaczko, adding, "I look forward to broadening this effort and taking the next logical step of convening public decision-making meetings of the Commission."

To begin this new initiative, Jaczko released his views on several items before the Commission, including a draft final rule on decommissioning planning and a draft policy statement on safety culture.

And he released his Sept. 17 vote on the update to the Waste Confidence rulemaking, which has been before the Commission since June. In those he indicated his agreement with the proposed final rule language offered by the staff after an extended public comment period and also proposed a compromise position. His vote sheet reads in part, "The Commission has reasonable assurance that sufficient high-level radioactive waste and spent fuel disposal capacity will be available 50-60 years beyond the license life of operation... of a reactor."

"While the path to resolution of the Waste Confidence issue is not yet clear, I look forward to continuing to seek a final Commission decision on this issue," Jaczko added.

Recently released votes for all of the Commissioners can be found at this website: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/recent/2009/> and <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/cvr/2009/>.

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