



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

March 3, 2010

To: All Operating Reactor Licensees

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RESPONSE DATA SYSTEM MODEM TRANSITION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is modernizing the Emergency Response Data System (ERDS), which provides a one-way electronic data link for displaying a limited set of plant parameters at the NRC Operations Center. This letter provides information on the basis for the modernization and requests your support for a timely transition, as the NRC's contracted technical assistance to support the industry's transition will expire in September 2011.

The ERDS system has served the industry and NRC well since its introduction in the early 1990s, improving the efficiency of information sharing for event response. However, the system currently uses obsolete dial-up modems for data transmission which require significant maintenance. Also, Federal information security standards enacted since ERDS was installed cannot be fully met with the existing modems. The NRC has worked with the industry since 2005 on plans to redesign the ERDS data transmission scheme and virtual private network (VPN) technology was selected as the best replacement option.

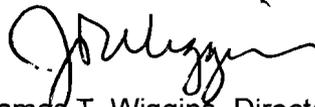
The ERDS VPN provides a significant level of protection against cyber attacks; however licensees will need to determine whether the equipment supplying the plant data to ERDS is within the scope of NRC cyber security requirements. Depending on how the computer system at a particular site is configured to supply plant data to ERDS, the interfacing equipment may not be within scope of NRC cyber security requirements. Notwithstanding the applicability of these requirements, the VPN security controls provide a very high level of assurance that ERDS can not be used as a pathway for cyber attacks on licensee computer systems (see Agencywide Documents Access and Management System number ML100130359).

The NRC has contracted technical support to provide configuration assistance during the industry's transition to the VPN (see NRC Regulatory Issue Summary 2009-13). While the NRC has not set a date for removal of the dial-up modems, they can not remain connected to the ERDS infrastructure indefinitely. In addition, if an NRC-provided modem fails, a VPN appliance may be provided as the replacement due to difficulties procuring the dial-up modems.

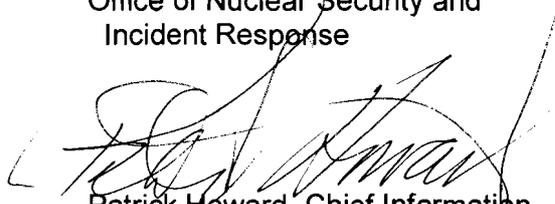
To All Operating Reactor Licensees 2

We strongly encourage your organization to make a timely transition to the VPN, and to use the available configuration assistance prior to September 2011.

Sincerely,



James T. Wiggins, Director
Office of Nuclear Security and
Incident Response



Patrick Howard, Chief Information
Security Officer
Computer Security Office

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2

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James T. Wiggins, Director/**RA**
Office of Nuclear Security and
Incident Response

Patrick Howard, Chief Information/**RA**
Security Officer
Computer Security Office

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