

February 4, 2011

The Honorable Robert Bentley
Governor of Alabama
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2751

Dear Governor Bentley:

As Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am writing to thank Alabama for its efforts related to management and protection of radioactive sources. I would also like to communicate a priority for ongoing activities in that regard, and to request Alabama's commitment and support going forward. The NRC and the States' joint efforts over the last several years have resulted in a strong and effective regulatory framework that provides a common baseline level of security to ensure protection of public health and safety. The management and protection of radioactive sources is a top priority for the NRC, and I would like to request that it continue to be a high priority for your State.

Over the last several years, the NRC developed a National Source Tracking System (NSTS) to provide an up-to-date accounting of the more than 70,000 high-risk radioactive sources in the United States. This secure, accessible, and easy-to-use computer system tracks high-risk nuclear materials from the time they are manufactured or imported through the time of their disposal or export, or until they undergo radioactive decay to the point at which they are no longer a security concern. This major security initiative helps improve the accountability of radioactive materials, and its success would not have occurred without the active participation of the Agreement States.

The NRC is now developing a complementary information technology system to the NSTS that will house key license information and facilitate regulatory approval of transactions of radioactive materials. This system will provide the tools needed to close a potential vulnerability in the way radioactive materials are licensed and transferred between licensees, and it will also allow for modernization of how license data are stored and shared. However, the system can only work if it includes nationwide licensee data. Therefore, NRC will be seeking input and support from all 37 Agreement State radiation control programs, including yours, during system development and deployment. I hope that you will encourage your State program to participate in the development of this system. I recognize that there are many issues competing for State resources. I can assure you that NRC will remain mindful of those competing factors as this program proceeds.

In other areas, the agency continues to work with the Agreement States to finalize comprehensive regulations and guidance for security of sources. We are also working with the Agreement States to enhance management of sources that may be low-level radioactive waste, including source disposal and financial assurance.

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Thank you for your ongoing support of your radiation control program, which serves an important role in ensuring the continued safety and security of radioactive materials and protection of the environment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any concerns or the advancement of our mutual security goals.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Gregory B. Jaczko

cc: James L. McNees

Similar letters sent to:

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