

**Santos, Cayetano**

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**From:** Powers, Dana A [dapower@sandia.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 18, 2006 1:19 PM  
**To:** Sam Duraiswamy  
**Subject:** FW: SOARCA project  
**Attachments:** soarcareponse.pdf; soarcalet.doc

Sam,

I have received the following message and attachments from Ed Lyman concerning the SOARCA project. I believe Lyman has sent these things to me in my capacity as a member of ACRS. As you are aware, I am conflicted with respect to this issue and so don't think I should respond. Lyman's concern seems to be over a procedural issue that is not within the purview of ACRS. The general issue of risk communication and the SOARCA project is probably within the interest of ACRS.

Dana Powers

-----Original Message-----

From: Edwin Lyman [mailto:[elyman@ucsusa.org](mailto:elyman@ucsusa.org)]  
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2006 9:48 AM  
To: Powers, Dana A  
Subject: SOARCA project

"MMS <sandia.gov>" made the following  
annotations on 12/11/06, 09:45:43

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**NOTICE**

An exploit in Microsoft Word has recently been discovered.

If you know the sender of this message, please contact that sender and verify that they intended to send you the attachment(s) before opening.

If you do not know the sender, do not open this file as it may be malicious.

Please contact the CCHD (845-2243) if you have any questions.

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**NOTICE**

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Dear Dana,

I hope that you are well.

Unfortunately, I had not been aware of the ACRS discussion last week on the SOARCA project, or I would have liked to have made some comments.

I'm attaching my correspondence with the Commission regarding my request to release the SECY and SRM on SOARCA or at least redacted versions of them.

I would really appreciated your thoughts on this matter (off the record, of course).

Best regards,

Ed Lyman

J/

Union of Concerned Scientists  
[elyman@ucsusa.org](mailto:elyman@ucsusa.org)  
(202) 331-5445

December 1, 2006

Dr. Edwin S. Lyman, PhD  
Senior Staff Scientist  
Global Security Program  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
1707 H Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Dr. Lyman:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter dated November 3, 2006, regarding the State-of-the-Art Reactor Consequence Analyses (SOARCA) project being conducted by the agency. In your letter, you requested that the NRC release SECY-05-0233, "Plan for Developing State-of-the-Art Reactor Consequence Analyses," and the associated staff requirements memorandum issued by the Commission. After careful consideration of your request, we decline to release the documents because they contain pre-decisional, security-related, and other sensitive unclassified information.

I want to assure you that the NRC does not have a predetermined outcome for the SOARCA project. To the contrary, the NRC is actively engaging stakeholders through a variety of means, including public meetings, to ensure that the basis for the project is understood and the supporting assumptions, approach, and methodology are scientifically grounded. The NRC will continue to hold public meetings and conduct public briefings of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards during the conduct of this project. As will be evident from these meetings and briefings, the project will be conducted using realistic assumptions, state-of-the-art methods, and current nuclear power plant configurations. It is currently planned to update the NRC's web site to include information on this project, such as the purpose, approach, and opportunities for public participation.

The Commission appreciates your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Dale E. Klein

November 3, 2006

The Honorable Dale Klein  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Chairman Klein:

On behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), I am writing in reference to the "State-of-the-Art Reactor Consequence Assessment" (SOAR-CA) project, being undertaken by the Office of Research (RES).

It has come to our attention that the staff paper (SECY) to the Commission originally seeking approval for this project, SECY-05-0233, as well as the corresponding Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM), are being withheld from the public because the NRC considers them "sensitive information."

This decision is bizarre in light of the fact that the SOAR-CA project itself is apparently going to be conducted with full public oversight and involvement, as program staff made clear at the public meetings on September 8, 2006 and October 25, 2006. It is difficult to comprehend how the details of the project itself (ultimately including the results) can be made public, yet the Commission's instructions to the staff on the project's guidelines are being kept secret. It appears that the Commission has imposed significant constraints on the project, but does not wish to make those limits known to the public. Given that NRC staff and at least one Commissioner have repeatedly asserted that the consequence results of the 1982 Sandia National Laboratories "Calculation of Reactor Accident Consequences ("CRAC2") study are unrealistically high, one can justifiably be concerned that the NRC has a predetermined outcome for the project. Surely the Commission does not want to give the appearance that it has skewed the study so that it will support this predetermined outcome. This will badly damage the credibility of SOAR-CA project and render it useless as a means of increasing public confidence in nuclear power and the NRC's scientific integrity.

If the Commission truly wants to convey to the public the most accurate assessment of the potential consequences of severe accidents at nuclear reactors, all the assumptions underlying the assessment, and the justifications supporting them, should be clearly presented. To withhold such vital information under the “sensitive information” moniker is the worst kind of abuse of the vague and often arbitrary guidelines on public information that the Commission has applied since the 9/11 attacks. We note that Commissioner Jaczko stated on his February 2006 vote response sheet on SECY-05-0233 that “the staff should make SECY-05-0233 publicly available.” This indicates that the notion that this document is too sensitive for public release is subject to serious question.

On behalf of UCS, I would urge you to release SECY-05-0233 and the associated SRM in their entirety. If this is impossible, we would encourage you to release redacted versions, with the reason for each redaction clearly explained.

My colleagues and I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss this matter. We look forward to your favorable response to our request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edwin S. Lyman  
Senior Staff Scientist  
Union of Concerned Scientists