

**Waiver of \$500,000 Single Conference Limitation**  
**Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-12-12**  
**Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations**

As Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I hereby waive the \$500,000 limitation on conference expenses prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," dated May 11, 2012, with respect to the 2013 iteration of the NRC's annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC), which is anticipated to be held in March 2013. For the reasons detailed below, I have determined that exceptional circumstances exist whereby spending in excess of \$500,000 on hosting the 2013 RIC is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose.

The NRC's mission is to "License and regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment." To support this mission and the NRC's commitment to conduct its work openly and transparently, the RIC provides a unique forum which brings together diverse groups of stakeholders to inform them of significant policy decisions and regulatory oversight activities. Additionally, the RIC offers an environment where NRC staff and stakeholders share relevant information, exchange views and perspectives, and raise concerns about the important safety, security and policy issues before the agency. As we continue to learn from recent events and natural disasters, this forum is crucial to the mission of the agency.

Since its inception in 1987, the RIC has grown to become one of the premier nuclear conferences of its kind in the world. It is widely attended, bringing together more than 3,000 participants from over 33 countries. Participants include members of the public, Federal, State, and local Government officials; nuclear safety regulators from other Nations; experts from the national laboratories; advocacy groups; media representatives; licensees; vendors; and other interested stakeholders. The technical program features nuclear experts from across the agency, as well as external speakers from industry, academia, public interest groups, and the international community. This educational conference also provides an exceptional opportunity for attendees to hear first-hand views of each member of the Commission related to emerging regulatory issues and policy matters affecting the agency and the stakeholders.

The face-to-face interaction with members of industry, private interest groups, and other stakeholders is vital and provides a breadth of opportunity to network, share ideas, search for solutions and establish relationships with colleagues from around the world. The RIC is highly valued by both the agency and the stakeholders for its technical and educational content and its continuation is strongly supported by industry as reflected in Nuclear Energy Institute's [letter](#) to the NRC dated June 1, 2012 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML12153A358).

As part of our fiscal stewardship, every aspect of the planning, logistics and implementation is carefully scrutinized and monitored to ensure all monies are spent in the most cost effective and efficient manner. Typically, the RIC contract expenses are in the range of \$700,000 each year.

To successfully execute a conference with the magnitude of the RIC requires meticulous coordination and effective management of resources. The NRC utilizes in-house resources to support the planning and logistics aspects of the conference. These support areas include the following: technical program development, Web support, design and production of conference materials, registration and onsite staffing.

The conference location – across the street from NRC Headquarters – provides tremendous savings in that it completely eliminates travel and per diem costs for most federal attendees, completely eliminates conference preparation travel, enables the NRC to use its own Headquarters facility for some of the needed additional meeting space without incurring any additional cost, and enables NRC staff to attend only the portions of the conference that are valuable to them and to return to their workplaces for the remainder of each day. Additionally, this location enables NRC staff and our international counterparts to take that opportunity to conduct non-conference business that would otherwise necessitate international travel, further reducing annual travel costs.

The compelling purposes achieved by the RIC, coupled with its remarkable cost-effectiveness, constitute exceptional circumstances making this the most cost-effective option. On this basis, I am confident that the costs associated with executing the RIC 2013 are valid and prudent. Therefore, in accordance with OMB Memorandum M-12-12, I hereby waive the \$500,000 single conference limitation for the RIC 2013.

X  Approved

Not Approve

/s/   7/11/12   
Chairman Allison M. Macfarlane Date