



USA Activities on Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) Final Report - Stakeholder Engagement

13th Session of the Forum on Stakeholder Confidence
Prague, Czech Republic
October 2012

Jose R. Cuadrado, Project Manager
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Outline

- Background
- BRC Final Recommendations
- NRC and DOE Activities related to BRC
- BRC Recommendations: Stakeholder Engagement
- Summary



Background: Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

- Formed at the direction of the President to Secretary of Energy and included leading experts
- Conducted a comprehensive review of polices for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle; not a siting commission
- Detailed analysis, with eight major recommendations



BRC Final Recommendations

- BRC proposed a national nuclear waste management strategy with eight key elements, including:
 - New, consent-based approach to siting future nuclear waste management facilities
 - New organization dedicated solely to implementing the waste management program and empowered with the authority and resources to succeed
 - Access to the funds nuclear utility ratepayers are providing for the purpose of nuclear waste management
 - Prompt efforts to develop one or more geologic disposal facilities

BRC Final Recommendations (cont.)

- BRC proposed a national nuclear waste management strategy with eight key elements, including:
 - Prompt efforts to develop one or more consolidated storage facilities
 - Prompt efforts to prepare for the eventual large-scale transport of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste to consolidated storage and disposal facilities when such facilities become available
 - Support for continued U.S. innovation in nuclear energy technology and for workforce development
 - Active U.S. leadership in international efforts to address safety, waste management, non-proliferation, and security concerns



DOE's Activities related to BRC Final Report

- US Congress tasked DOE to develop a strategy for the management of spent nuclear fuel and other nuclear waste; an internal DOE review is underway
- DOE internal review will assess, and may supplement, BRC recommendations at more detailed level



NRC's Activities

- NRC staff reported to Commission on implications of BRC recommendations (SECY-12-0037)
- Several BRC recommendations are consistent with already ongoing NRC regulatory activities:
 - Extended storage and transportation program
 - Research on alternative disposal options
- NRC cannot implement several BRC recommendations until statutory changes are made



BRC Recommendations: Stakeholder Outreach

- BRC recommendations recognize the importance of meaningful and comprehensive stakeholder engagement in new nuclear waste management strategy (consent-based siting)
- Role of implementing organization (DOE or new organization) in stakeholder engagement to evolve as new siting process is adopted
- NRC's efforts to engage stakeholders will continue to emphasize its role as independent regulator as new strategy develops



Lessons Learned from Stakeholder Interactions

- US experience has highlighted the importance of several elements for stakeholder confidence in waste management strategy:
 - Establishing fair, predictable, and transparent decision-making processes, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all participants;
 - Providing meaningful and frequent opportunities for public to participate and interact with decision-makers;
 - Ensuring communications with the public are specifically tailored to the audience (technical or non-technical), and;
 - Ensuring that final decisions are based on an objective evaluation of all relevant information and evidence

Summary

- BRC has recognized the importance of consent and public engagement for successful implementation of a new nuclear waste management strategy
- DOE has been tasked to develop a strategy for the management of spent nuclear fuel and other nuclear waste -- awaiting the results of its internal review
- The NRC will continue to highlight its independent role and adapt its approaches for effective stakeholder engagement
- Experience from US and international efforts to site nuclear waste facilities will inform development of new strategy