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To: Cindy Blaney

Date: 3-15-13

Fax No: 301-492-3446

From: Bernard Bevil

Comments:

Cindy, my email address is sandra.page@
arkansas.gov



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Mike Beebe

Paul K. Halverson, DrPH, FACHE, Director and State Health Officer

March 15, 2013

Cindy Bladey, Chief
Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch
Office of Administration
Mail Stop: TWB-05-B01M
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Dear Ms Bladey:

The Arkansas Department of Health, Radiation Control Section, has reviewed the Federal Register Notice, Volume 78, Number 12, January 17, 2013, concerning the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff review of policies, regulations, guidance, and technical needs relating to the future regulatory management and long term storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Responding to the Federal Register Notice, "Request for Comments on Retrievability, Cladding Integrity and Safe Handling of Spent Fuel at an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation and During Transportation", the Department provides the following general comments:

- The NRC should review and develop spent fuel regulations that are consistent with and in support of the management philosophy and concepts expressed in the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC) Report and the U.S. Department of Energy's January 2013 response to the BRC Report for both centralized long term storage away from reactor sites (while awaiting final repository disposal) and the final disposal at a repository. It is mandatory that centralized long term storage be implemented in the near term.
- Considering the absence of specific knowledge of and the uncertainties associated with the condition of high burnup spent fuel following long storage times, it appears that the capability to retrieve individually canned fuel assemblies may be the appropriate policy choice for the long term; however, this policy, of course, may change depending on the findings of current/future research in fuel cladding

behavior. Certainly, the research programs relating to spent fuel cladding and aging issues must continue.

Responding to statements contained in the Request for Comments, the critical design issues and acceptance criteria of future repositories should be addressed and coordinated in the near term to ensure safety and to avoid (or lessen) the amount of repackaging that is required, thereby reducing radiation dose and time, and costs. Future designs of repositories should learn from the experience gained by current designs but must not be constrained by current practices.

- Based on the above comments relating to spent fuel assembly retrievability and long term centralized storage, retrievability should be extended to transportation. The transportation of high burnup spent fuel after a potentially long storage period at reactor sites and a centralized storage facility, and then to a repository, adds another level of uncertainty about the spent fuel cladding behavior. Operationally at some point in time, it may be necessary to open the spent fuel casks to assess the condition of the fuel prior to any further handling of the assembly or casks.

Accordingly, the package application for the certificate of compliance must include the design and operation of facilities and methods to handle potentially damaged spent fuel.

Although it is not specifically addressed in the Request for Comment, the future movement and transportation of spent fuel from multiple on-site storage locations to a centralized storage facility(ies) and/or repository(ies) will have a significant impact on State and local governments who will be charged with the transportation and radiological safety and emergency response in their jurisdiction. The transportation infrastructure will also be significantly challenged. These activities must be addressed by the NRC, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Homeland Security with the highest priority to protect the public health and safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Bernard Bevill, Section Chief
Radiation Control Program

cc: Jared Thompson, Program Manager
Radioactive Materials Program