

April 4, 2013

Judson H. Turner, Director
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Division
4244 International Parkway, Suite 120
Atlanta, GA 30354

Dear Mr. Turner:

Thank you for your March 7, 2013, letter responding to the recommendations in the final Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program (IMPEP) report dated February 5, 2013. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff has reviewed Georgia's Program Improvement Plan (Plan), which was submitted to the NRC, as required by the Heightened Oversight process. The Plan is available in NRC's Agencywide Document Access and Management System using Accession Number ML13070A161. The NRC staff has determined that the proposed actions adequately address the recommendations made in the Final IMPEP report. As a result of our review, the NRC has approved the Plan as submitted.

As discussed in the February 5, 2013, letter from the NRC, the Georgia Radioactive Materials Program is on Heightened Oversight, pending the Commission's review of the NRC staff's recommendation regarding placement of the program on Probation. Heightened Oversight is a process that the NRC uses to track the progress of improvements in an Agreement State program experiencing performance weaknesses. The process involves the State's preparation and submittal of the Plan, bimonthly conference calls between the State and the NRC, and submission of updated Plans prior to each bimonthly call. The first bimonthly call is scheduled for April 9, 2013 at 1:00 pm EDT. After the April 9th call, please submit an updated Plan to the Regional State Agreements Officer at least five days in advance of each bimonthly call.

The NRC Staff identified the following additional items for consideration in your Plan updates:

1. For Recommendation 1 of the Plan, the Milestones would be enhanced by including a self-assessment to determine the effectiveness of the actions taken to ensure higher priority (Priority 1, 2, and 3) and initial inspections are conducted in a timely manner.
2. For Recommendation 4 of the Plan, the third Milestone would be enhanced by a broader examination of inspector performance, rather than limiting the review to the deficient accompanied inspectors. A broader examination may identify other contributors to the deficient inspections, beyond the "inadequate preparation." Also, a self-assessment following the implementation of corrective actions would aid the State in determining the effectiveness of its actions taken to improve inspection quality.

3. For Recommendation 13 of the Plan, the Milestones would be enhanced by an assessment (management assessment, independent assessment, etc.) to determine the effectiveness of the efforts to improve communication and team-work in the radiation control program. Such an assessment would provide a means to ensure that changes made to the program are effective and to identify any additional areas for improvement not initially considered.

The Management Review Board directed a full IMPEP be conducted with your program in the January 2014 timeframe. During this IMPEP, the team will evaluate the effectiveness of Georgia's response to the recommendations, as well as the implementation of your overall program.

I appreciate the positive actions that you and your staff have taken in regards to the recommendations. I also wish to acknowledge Georgia's continued support for the Agreement State program. I look forward to our agencies continuing to work cooperatively in the future.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Brian J. McDermott, Director
Division of Materials Safety and State Agreements
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs

3. For Recommendation 13 of the Plan, the Milestones would be enhanced by an assessment (management assessment, independent assessment, etc.) to determine the effectiveness of the efforts to improve communication and team-work in the radiation control program. Such an assessment would provide a means to ensure that changes made to the program are effective and to identify any additional areas for improvement not initially considered.

The Management Review Board directed a full IMPEP be conducted with your program in the January 2014 timeframe. During this IMPEP, the team will evaluate the effectiveness of Georgia's response to the recommendations, as well as the implementation of your overall program.

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Brian J. McDermott Director
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