

March 29, 2013

Dr. Edward Lyman, Senior Scientist
Union of Concerned Scientists
1825 K Street, NW #800
Washington, DC 20006

SUBJECT: FUKUSHIMA DAI-ICHI LESSONS LEARNED AND FILTERED VENTS FOR
MARK I AND II BOILING WATER REACTORS

Dear Dr. Lyman:

I am responding to your letter dated February 7, 2013, to Chairman Macfarlane of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regarding the agency's continued efforts to address the lessons learned from the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant. In regard to the ongoing activities to address the recommendations of the near term task force, the NRC staff's most recent status update is provided in SECY-13-0020, "Third 6-Month Status Update on Response to Lessons Learned from Japan's March 11, 2011, Great Tohoku Earthquake and Subsequent Tsunami," dated February 14, 2013.

Your letter specifically mentioned your views on the options presented in SECY-12-0157, "Consideration of Additional Requirements for Containment Venting Systems for Boiling Water Reactors with Mark I and Mark II Containments," dated November 26, 2012. The Commission considered the technical and regulatory analyses provided by the NRC staff and the information provided by various stakeholders in its deliberations concerning the appropriate regulatory actions for venting capabilities for Mark I and Mark II containments. The Commission recently issued directions to the NRC staff in a staff requirements memorandum dated March 19, 2013, which defines short- and long-term actions to address the lessons learned about containment venting from the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident. The immediate actions involve developing an amendment to the previously issued order (EA-12-050) to licensees with plants having Mark I and Mark II containments to require that the reliable hardened venting systems be capable of operation during severe accident conditions. The staff will be scheduling several public meetings to discuss the draft proposed order included as an enclosure in SECY-12-057, including the schedules for implementing the revised requirements. Following the issuance of the Order, the NRC staff will continue to engage stakeholders regarding the development of implementation guidance and licensees' plans for designing and installing the required plant modifications. The longer-term actions involve assessing and developing options for regulatory changes to address the performance of containments during severe accident conditions, including the possible installation of engineered filtering systems.

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The NRC staff will schedule multiple public meetings to discuss the development of technical bases and possible regulatory approaches to address the longer-term assignment from the Commission. Hopefully you will participate in these public interactions to ensure that the NRC staff has the benefit of your insights and any additional information you wish to share on this important topic.

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming opportunities to participate in the development of the amendment to EA-12-050, the related guidance, or the longer-term activities associated with assessing possible improvements to containment performance during severe accident conditions, please contact Mr. William Reckley of my staff at (301) 415-7490, or by email at william.reckley@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

David L. Skeen, Director
Japan Lessons-Learned Project Directorate
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Sincerely,

David L. Skeen, Director
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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