NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC
(Seabrook Station, Unit 1)
<u>License Renewal Application</u>

NRC Staff Answer to Motion for Summary Disposition of Contention 4B

ATTACHMENT 4B-M

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Severe Accident Risks: An Assessment for Five U.S. Nuclear Power Plants

Final Summary Report

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

following an accident is provided by the containment spray recirculation system, whereas, in some PWR plants, post-accident heat removal can also be provided by the residual heat removal system heat exchangers in the emergency core cooling system.

3. **Reactor Cavity Design**

   The reactor cavity area is not connected directly with the containment sump area. As a result, if the containment spray systems fail to operate during an accident, the reactor cavity will be relatively dry. The amount of water in the cavity can have a significant influence on phenomena that can occur after reactor vessel lower head failure, such as magnitude of containment pressurization from direct containment heating and post-vessel failure steam generation, the formation of coolable debris beds, and the retention of radioactive material released during core-concrete interactions.

4. **Containment Building Design**

   The containment volume and high failure pressure provide considerable capacity for accommodation of severe accident pressure loads.

3.4 Source Term Analysis

3.4.1 Results of Source Term Analysis

In the Surry plant, the absolute frequency of an early failure of the containment* due to the loads produced in a severe accident is small. Although the absolute frequency of containment bypass is also small, for internal accident initiators it is greater than the absolute early failure frequency. Thus, bypass sequences are the more likely means of obtaining a large release of radioactive material. Figure 3.7 illustrates the distribution of source terms associated with the accident progression bin representing containment bypass. The range of release fractions is quite large, primarily as the result of the range of parameters provided by the experts. The magnitude of the release for many of the elemental groups is also large, indicative of a potentially serious accident. Typically, consequence analysis codes only predict the occurrence of early fatalities in the surrounding population when the release fractions of the volatile groups (iodine, cesium, and tellurium) exceed approximately 10 percent (Ref. 3.11). For the bypass accident progression bin, the median value for the volatile radionuclides is approximately at the 10 percent level whereas for the early containment failure bin not shown, the releases are lower. The median values are somewhat smaller than 10 percent, but the ranges extend to approximately 30 percent.

In contrast to the large source term for the bypass bin, Figure 3.8 provides the range of source terms predicted for an accident progression bin involving late failure of the containment. The fractional release of radionuclides for this bin is several orders of magnitude smaller than for the bypass bin, except for iodine, which can be reevolved late in the accident. It should be noted that, for many of the elemental groups, the mean of the distribution falls above the 95th percentile value. For distributions that occur over a range of many orders of magnitude, sampling from the extreme tail of the distribution (at the high end) can dominate and cause this result.

Additional discussion on source term perspectives is provided in Chapter 10.

3.4.2 Important Plant Characteristics (Source Term)

Plant design features that affect the mode and likelihood of containment failure also influence the magnitude of the source term. These features were described in the previous section. Plant features that have a more direct influence on the source term are described in the following paragraphs.

1. **Containment Spray System**

   The Surry plant has an injection spray system that uses the refueling water storage tank as a water source and a recirculation spray system that recirculates water from the containment sump. Sprays are an effective means for removing airborne radioactive aerosols. For sequences in which sprays operate throughout the accident, it is most likely that the containment will not fail and the leakage to the environment will be minor. If the containment does fail late in the accident following extended spray operation, analyses indicate that the release of aerosols will be extremely small. Even in a station blackout case with delayed recovery of sprays, condensation of steam from the air, and a subsequent hydrogen explosion that fails containment, Source Term Code Package (STCP) analyses indicate that spray operation results in substantially reduced source terms (Ref. 3.12).

*In this section, the absolute frequencies of early containment failure are discussed (i.e., including the frequencies of the plant damage states). This is in contrast to the previous section, which discusses conditional failure probabilities (i.e., given that a plant damage state occurs).

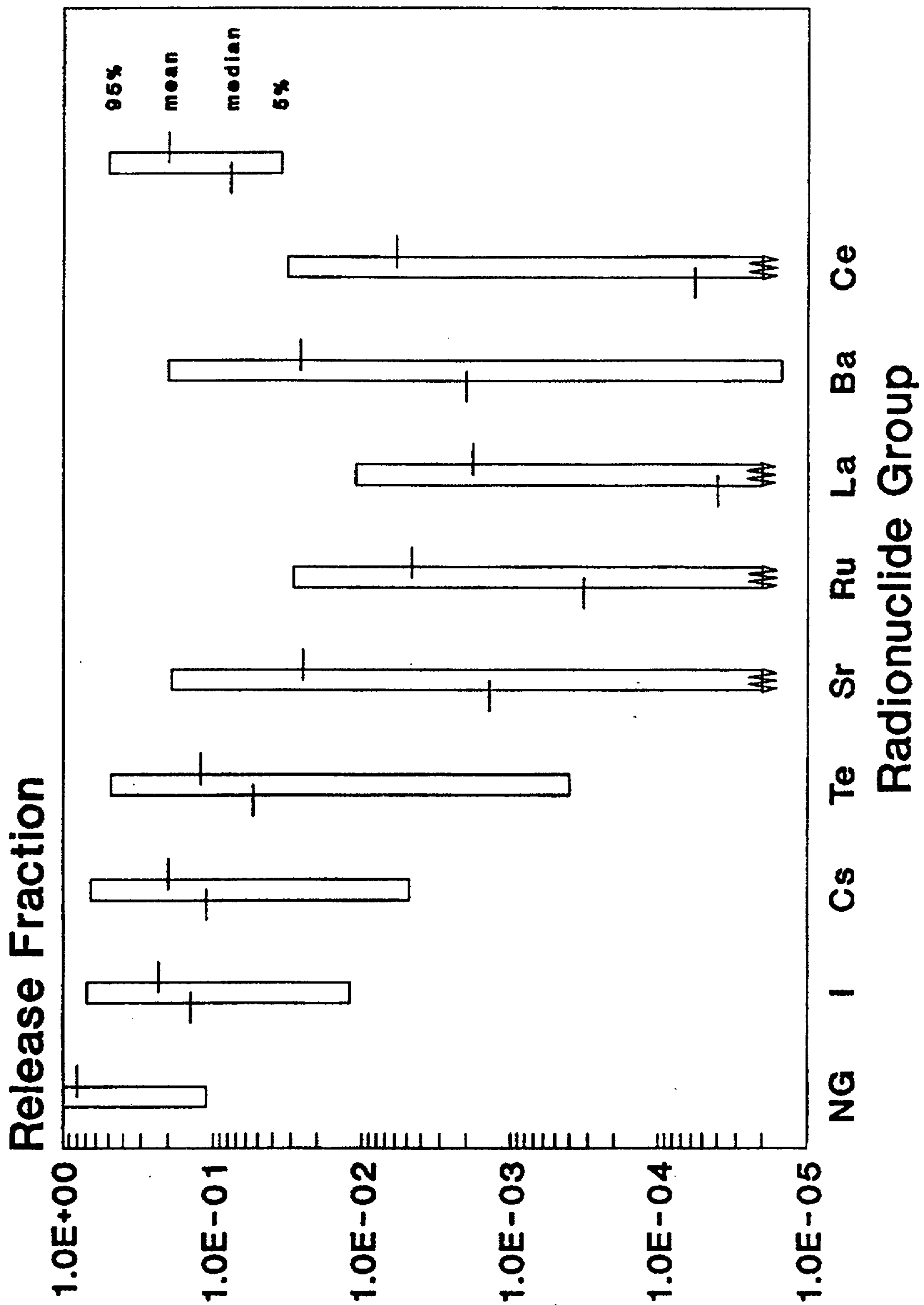

Figure 3.7 Source term distributions for containment bypass at Surry.

effects except for station blackout sequences. However, when power is recovered following a station blackout, if the igniters are turned on before the air-return fans have diluted the hydrogen concentration at or above the ice beds, the ignition could trigger a detonation or deflagration that could fail containment. These blackout sequences, however, represent a small fraction of the overall frequency of core damage.

3. **Lower Compartment Design**

   The design and construction of the seal table is such that if the reactor coolant system is at an elevated pressure upon vessel breach, the core debris is likely to get into the seal table room, which is directly in contact with the containment, and melt through the wall causing a break of containment. The design of the reactor cavity, however, does have the potential to cool the molten core debris and also mitigate the effects of potential direct containment heating events for those sequences where water is in the reactor cavity.

5.4 Source Term Analysis

5.4.1 Results of Source Term Analysis

The absolute frequencies of early containment failure from severe accident loads and of containment bypass are predicted to be similar for the Sequoyah plant (Ref. 5.2). Figure 5.6 illustrates the release fractions for an early containment failure accident progression bin. The mean values for the release of the volatile radionuclide groups are approximately 10 percent, indicative of an accident with the potential for causing early fatalities. The in-vessel releases in these accidents can be subject to decontamination by the ice bed or by containment sprays following release to the containment. The sprays require ac power and are, therefore, not available prior to power recovery in station blackout plant damage states. The decontamination factor of the ice bed is also affected by the unavailability of the recirculation fans during station blackout.

The location and mode of containment failure are particularly important for early containment failure accident progression bins. A substantial fraction of the early failures result in subsequent bypass of the ice bed. In particular, if the containment ruptures as the result of a sudden, high-pressure load, such as from hydrogen deflagration, the damage to the containment wall could be extensive and is likely to result in bypass.

In most accident sequences for Sequoyah, there is substantial water in the cavity that can either prevent core-concrete attack, if a coolable debris bed is formed, or mitigate the release of radionuclides during core-concrete attack by scrubbing in the overlaying water pool. As a result, a large release to the environment of the less volatile radionuclides that are released from fuel during core-concrete attack is unlikely for the Sequoyah plant.

In the station blackout plant damage state, containment failure can occur late in the accident as the result of hydrogen combustion following power recovery. Figure 5.7 illustrates the source terms for a late containment failure accident progression bin in which it is unlikely that water would be available to scrub the core-concrete releases. In this case, decontamination by the ice bed is important in mitigating the environmental release. As discussed previously, for very wide ranges of uncertainty covering many orders of magnitude, one or more high results can dominate the mean such that it falls above the 95th percentile.

5.4.2 Important Plant Characteristics (Source Term)

1. **Ice Condenser**

   In addition to condensing steam, the ice beds can trap radioactive aerosols and vapors in a severe accident. The extent of decontamination is very sensitive to the volume fraction of steam in the flowing gas, which in turn depends on whether the air-return fans are operational. For a single pass through the ice condenser with high steam fraction, the range of decontamination factor used in this study was from 1.3 to 35 with a median of 7 for the in-vessel release and less than half as effective for the core-concrete release. For the low steam fraction scenarios with a single pass through the ice beds, the lower bound was approximately 1.1, the upper bound 8, and the median 2. The values used for multiple passes through the ice bed when the containment is intact and the air-return fans are running are only slightly larger, with a median value of 3. Thus, the credit for ice bed retention is substantially less than the values used for the decontamination effectiveness of suppression pools in the BWRs.

2. **Cavity Configuration**

   The Sequoyah reactor cavity will be flooded if there is sufficient water on the containment floor to overflow into the cavity. If the contents of the refueling water storage tank are

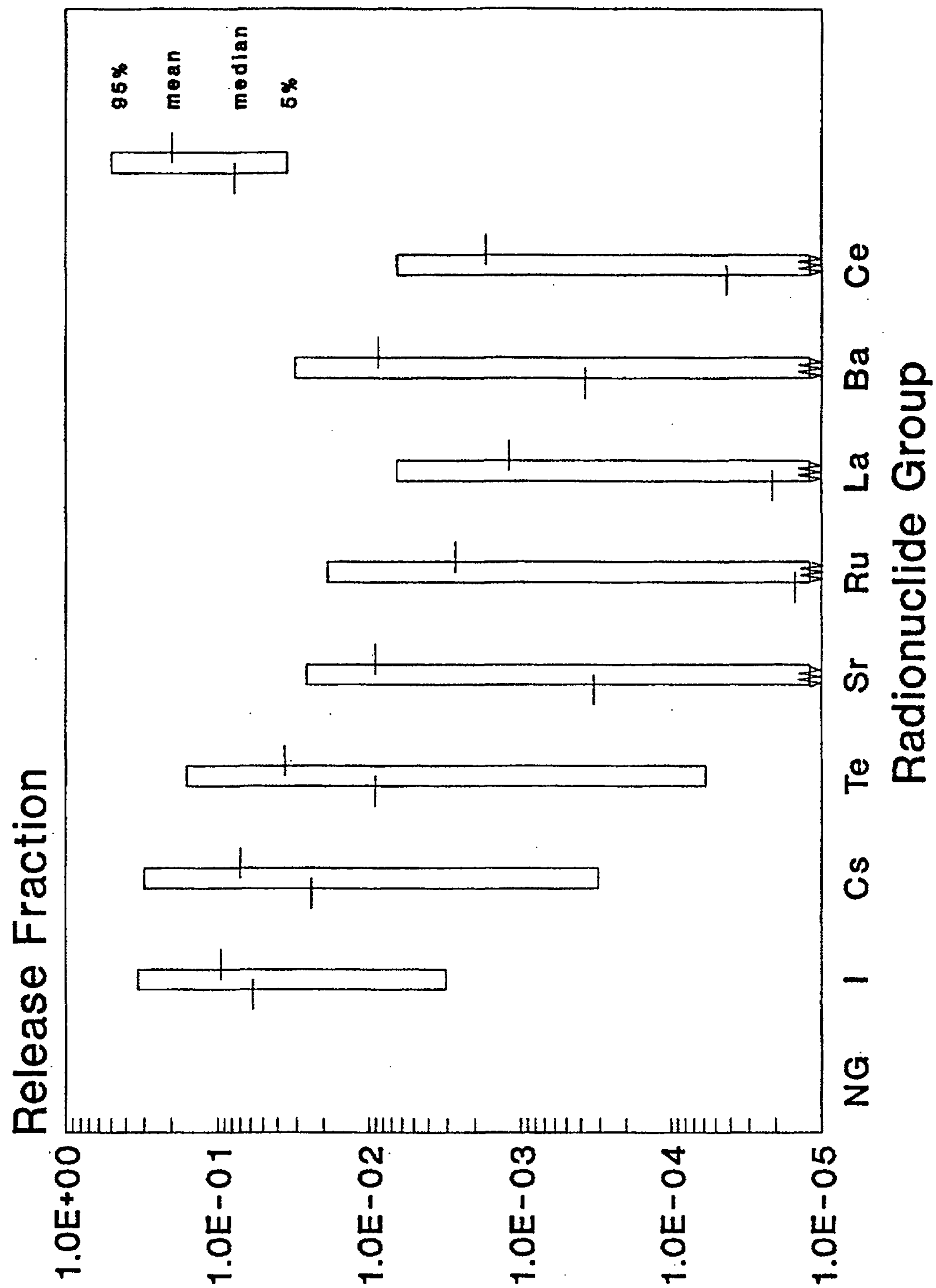

Figure 5.6 Source term distributions for early containment failure at Sequoyah.

7. ZION PLANT RESULTS

7.1 Summary Design Information

The Zion Nuclear Plant is a two-unit site. Each unit is a four-loop Westinghouse nuclear steam supply system rated at 1100 MWe and is housed in a large, prestressed concrete, steel-lined dry containment. The balance of plant systems were engineered by Sargent & Lundy. Located on the shore of Lake Michigan, about 40 miles north of Chicago, Illinois, Zion 1 started commercial operation in December 1973. Some important design features of the Zion plant are described in Table 7.1. A general plant schematic is provided in Figure 7.1.

This chapter provides a summary of the results provided in the risk analyses underlying this report (Refs. 7.1 and 7.2). A discussion of perspectives with respect to these results is provided in Chapters 8 through 12.

7.2 Core Damage Frequency Estimates

7.2.1 Summary of Core Damage Frequency Estimates*

The core damage frequency and risk analyses performed for this study considered accidents initiated only by internal events (Ref. 7.1); no external-event analyses were performed. The core damage frequency results obtained are provided in tabular form in Table 7.2. This study calculated a total median core damage frequency from internal events of 2.4E–4 per year.

7.2.1.1 Zion Analysis Approach

The Zion plant was previously analyzed in the Zion Probabilistic Safety Study (ZPSS), performed by the Commonwealth Edison Company, and in the review and evaluation of the ZPSS (Ref. 7.3), commonly called the Zion Review prepared by Sandia National Laboratories.

Since previous analyses of Zion already existed, it was decided to perform an update of the previous analyses rather than perform a complete reanalysis. Therefore, this analysis of Zion represents a limited rebaseline and extension of the dominant accident sequences from the ZPSS in light of the Zion Review comments, although incorporating some methods and issues (such as common-cause failure treatment, electric power recovery, and reactor coolant pump seal LOCA modeling) used in the other four plant studies.

The objective of this study was to perform an analysis that updated the previous Zion analyses and cast the model in a manner more consistent with the other accident frequency analyses. The models were not completely reconstructed in the small-event-tree, large-fault-tree modeling method used in the study of the other NUREG–1150 plants. Instead, the small-fault-tree, large-event-tree models from the original ZPSS were used as the basis for the update. These models were then revised according to the comments from Reference 7.3 and were enhanced to address risk issues using methods employed by the other plant studies.

This study incorporated specific issues into the systems and accident sequence models of the ZPSS. These issues reflect both changes in the Zion plant and general PRA assumptions that have arisen since the ZPSS was performed. New dominant accident sequences were determined by modifying and requantifying the event tree models developed for ZPSS. The major changes reflect the need for component cooling water and service water for emergency core cooling equipment and reactor coolant pump seal integrity. The original set of plant-specific data used in the ZPSS and Zion Review was verified as still valid and was used for this study. Additional discussion of the Zion methods is provided in Appendix A.

7.2.1.2 Internally Initiated Accident Sequences

A detailed description of accident sequences important at the Zion plant is provided in Reference 7.1. For this summary report, the accident sequences described in that reference have been grouped into six summary plant damage states. These are:

- Station blackout,
- Loss-of-coolant accident (LOCA),
- Component cooling water and service water induced reactor coolant pump seal LOCAs,
- Anticipated transients without scram (ATWS),

*In general, the results and perspectives provided here do not reflect recent modifications to the Zion plant. The benefit of the changes is noted, however, in specific places in the text (and discussed in more detail in Section 15 of Appendix C).

state frequency-weighted average,* the mean conditional probabilities from internal events of (1) early containment failure from a combination of in-vessel steam explosions, overpressurization, and containment isolation failures is 0.014, (2) late containment failure, mainly from basemat meltthrough is 0.24, (3) containment bypass from interfacing-system LOCA and induced steam generator tube rupture (SGTR) is 0.006, and (4) probability of no containment failure is 0.73. Figure 7.4 further displays the conditional probability distributions of early containment failure for the plant damage states, thereby providing the estimated range of uncertainties in these containment failure predictions. The principal conclusion to be drawn from the information in Figures 7.3 and 7.4 is that the probability of early containment failure for Zion is low, i.e., 1 to 2 percent.

Additional discussion on containment performance is provided in Chapter 9.

7.3.2 Important Plant Characteristics (Containment Performance)

Characteristics of the Zion design and operation that are important to containment performance include:

1. **Containment Volume and Pressure Capability**

   The combined magnitude of Zion's containment volume and estimated failure pressure provide considerable capability to withstand severe accident threats.

2. **Reactor Cavity Geometry**

   The Zion containment design arrangement has a large cavity directly beneath the reactor pressure vessel that communicates to the lower containment by means of an instrument tunnel. Provided the contents of the refueling water storage tank have been injected prior to vessel breach, this arrangement should provide a mechanism for quenching the molten core for some severe accidents (although there remains some uncertainties with respect to the coolability of molten core debris in such circumstances).

*Each value in the column in Figure 7.3 labeled "All" is a frequency-weighted average obtained by calculating the products of individual accident progression bin conditional probabilities for each plant damage state and the ratio of the frequency of that plant damage state to the total core damage frequency.

7.4 Source Term Analysis

7.4.1 Results of Source Term Analysis

The containment performance results for the Zion (large, dry containment) plant and the Surry (subatmospheric containment) plant are quite similar. The source terms for analogous accident progression bins are also quite similar. Figure 7.5 illustrates the source term for early containment failure. As at Surry, the source terms for early failure are somewhat less than those for containment bypass. Within the range of the uncertainty band, however, the source terms from early containment failure are potentially large enough to result in some early fatalities.

The most likely outcome of a severe accident at the Zion plant is that the containment would not fail. Figure 7.6 illustrates the range of source terms for the no containment failure accident progression bin. Other than for the noble gas and iodine radionuclide groups, the entire range of source terms is below a release fraction of 10E-5.

Additional discussion on source term perspectives is provided in Chapter 10.

7.4.2 Important Plant Characteristics (Source Term)

1. **Containment Spray System**

   The containment spray system at the Zion plant is not required to operate to provide long-term cooling to the containment, in contrast to the Surry plant. Operation of the spray system is very effective, however, in reducing the airborne concentration of aerosols. Other than the release of noble gases and some iodine evolution, the release of radioactive material to the atmosphere resulting from late containment leakage or basemat meltthrough in which sprays have operated for an extended time would be very small. The source terms for the late containment failure accident progression bin are slightly higher than, but similar to, those of the no containment failure bin illustrated in Figure 7.6.

2. **Cavity Configuration**

   The Zion cavity is referred to as a wet cavity, in that the accumulation of a relatively small amount of water on the containment floor will lead to overflow into the cavity. As a result, there is a substantial likelihood of eliminating by forming a coolable debris bed or

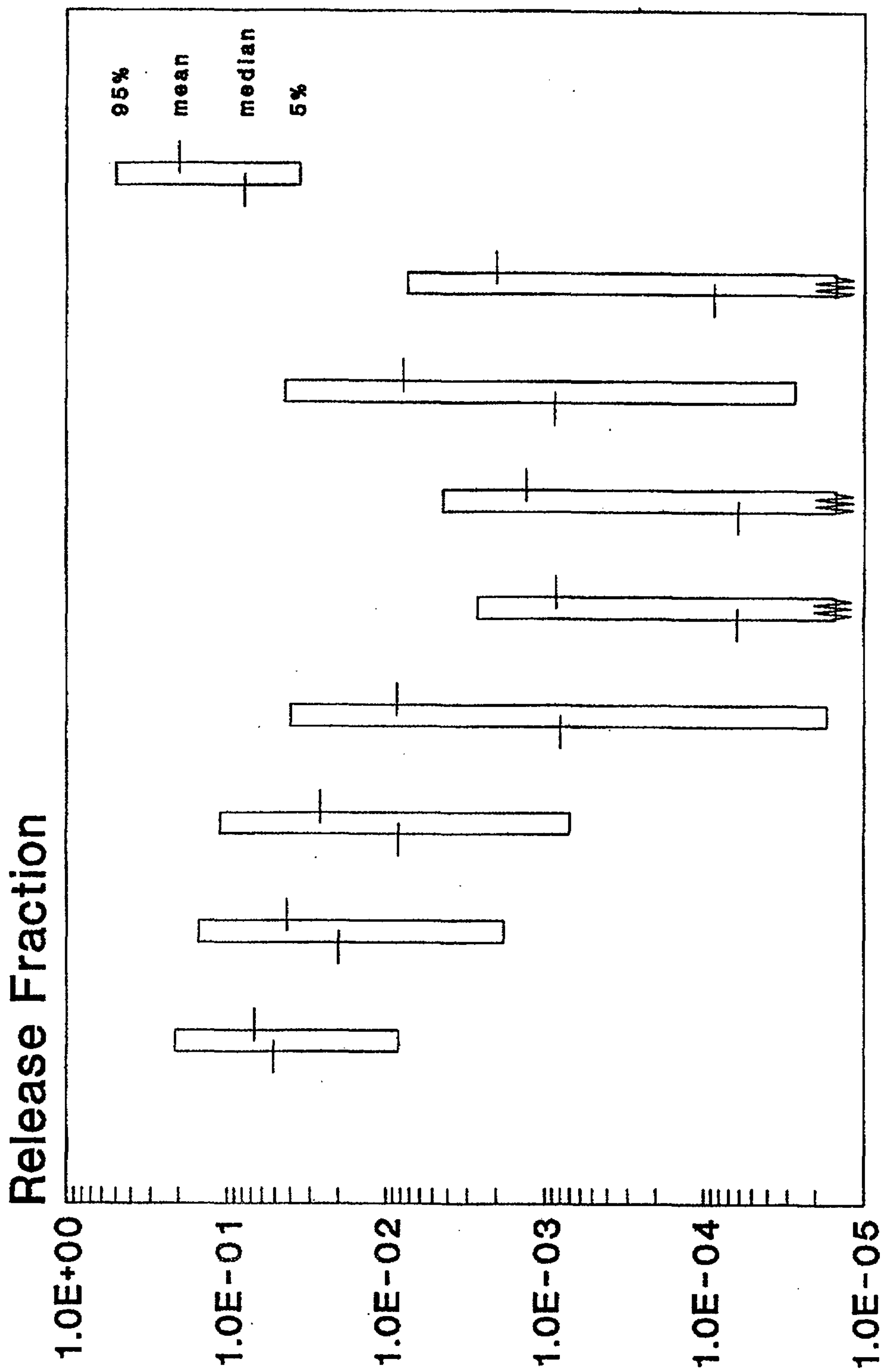

Figure 7.5 Source term distributions for early containment failure at Zion.

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7.3 D. L. Berry et al., "Review and Evaluation of the Zion Probabilistic Safety Study: Plant Analysis," Sandia National Laboratories, NUREG/CR-3300, Vol. 1, SAND83-1118, May 1984.

7.4 Cordell Reed, Commonwealth Edison Co. (CECo), "Zion Station Units 1 and 2. Commitment to Provide a Backup Water Source to the Charging Oil Coolers," NRC Docket Nos. 50-295 and 50-304, March 13, 1989.

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*Available in the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW., Washington, DC.