Beasley, Benjamin

From: Wilson, George
Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2012 3:02 PM
To: Demby, James; (b)(6) Per request of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers William Allerton
Cc: Karwoski, Kenneth; Beasley, Benjamin
Subject: NRC Generic Issue for Dam Failures

James, could you please send this reminder out to the remaining Dam Safety Officers in ICODS of the USNRC planned release of GI 204 on Dam failures, only the federal DSO's for the agencies. The document will not go public until March 6.

Eric, Travis, and Bill I wanted to ensure that each one of you received the document due to the impact specifically by Jocassee Dam and Missouri River Basin Dams.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has a Generic Issues Program that addresses potential safety concerns at NRC licensed facilities. Once a potential issue has been identified, the Generic Issues Program requires that a screening analysis be performed to determine whether the potential issue warrants further evaluation and possible regulatory action. The Generic Issues Program is evaluating an issue related to flooding at nuclear power plants as a result of the postulated failure of upstream dams. NRC regulations require nuclear plants to protect against external hazards, including floods from potential dam failure. The Program has recently completed a screening analysis of the dam failure flooding issue and recommends that the issue be formally accepted as a Generic Issue. Formal acceptance means that the issue will receive further evaluation and the status will be regularly reported in the NRC semi-annual reports to Congress. The screening analysis report will be made publicly available within the next couple of weeks.

Because of the tsunami induced flooding and the resultant reactor damage at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant in Japan, we anticipate heightened media and Congressional interest in this issue. Since the postulated initiating event is a dam failure, we want to coordinate with our associates on ICODS.

The estimated flood heights from the postulated failure of dams upstream of several nuclear plants are used in the screening analysis. In particular, the analysis mentions that an NRC licensee performed a flood height study at the request of FERC. Although several dams across the country are mentioned, the analysis discusses the likelihood of dam failure only for Jocassee Dam, upstream of the Oconee Nuclear Station in South Carolina. The discussion centers on a difference between the licensee (Duke) estimate of the probability of a random failure of Jocassee and the NRC estimate.

The analysis also discusses NRC inspection findings at Oconee Nuclear Station and at Fort Calhoun Station on the Missouri River near Omaha, Nebraska. The findings relate to the implementation of flood protection measures called for in the plant design basis. The analysis postulates that similar deficiencies in flood protection at other nuclear plants downstream of dams could exist. The analysis also discusses the development of regulatory guidance over time and how some plants may not have considered all the causes of upstream dam failure that are currently required. The analysis mentions a sample of nuclear plants that are downstream of dams, some of which may be susceptible to adverse flooding following a dam failure. Please note that the analysis is a preliminary screening and it does not draw any regulatory conclusions.

This information is not yet public and should be considered pre-decisional until after the analysis is publicly available. **The press release on GI-204 has been scheduled for roughly noon on Tuesday, March 6. The Screening Analysis will become available to the public**

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shortly thereafter. I will be glad to arrange a meeting or conference call with the NRC staff responsible for the Generic Issue.

Regards,
George Wilson

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