



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 161

DATE: October 20, 1987

TO: ALL EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: A LOOK TO THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY FUTURE AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS

As we look to the next few years, I believe it is timely to review our short and long range goals in fulfilling the mission assigned to us by the American people. As a first step, we should take stock of the nuclear industry which we regulate.

We now have 109 nuclear plants in our country authorized for power operation, with 10 more plants under active construction. We also have approximately 8,500 nuclear materials licenses monitored by the NRC, and approximately 15,000 additional licenses monitored by 29 Agreement States.

These numbers reflect the growth of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy from an idea to a sizeable industry. During this period of growth, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission focused significant resources on licensing matters. Now, as the number of operating plants has steadily increased and the licensing issues have essentially stabilized, we are adjusting our emphasis from licensing to operational safety matters. This past year we have made a significant reorganization of our headquarters staff to focus on this major change. At the same time, we have made adjustments to permit an increased emphasis on our relationships with the states and Indian tribes as well as on international nuclear matters.

Within this broad context, I would like to clarify what I see as NRC's short and long range goals.

First of all, our short range goals. The principal goal is to continue to assure safe operations by all licensees. Other short range goals support this overriding objective. The Commission is committed to excellence in inspection and monitoring programs and to fostering effective communication with licensees through improved clarity and timeliness in NRC's guidance and regulatory requirements. Considering the large number of nuclear

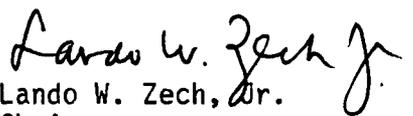
facilities and materials licensees that the Commission regulates, these short range matters constitute an extremely important segment of our day-to-day responsibilities in carrying out our statutory mission.

Next, NRC's long range goals. Formulation of long range goals and agency policies is a significant and complementary responsibility of the Commission. Some of our on-going and longer range efforts include implementation of NRC safety goals, addressing complex and difficult issues such as waste disposal, emergency planning, improvements in the licensing process, standardization, containment performance, source term, and station blackout. Of course, other long range goals concern our responsibilities in the areas of the environment as well as to the common defense and security, import-export matters, safeguards and non-proliferation.

Responsibility for policy development to assist Commission decision-making in these areas is assigned to the various headquarters offices.

I am constantly impressed by the competent, dedicated NRC people. I fully appreciate that there are occasional honest differences of opinion by our professional staff. I believe this is healthy and can be constructive. As most of you have heard me say before, I believe very strongly in teamwork with mutual respect. However, in carrying out our heavy responsibilities, I am convinced that listening to various viewpoints and weighing the merits of different positions help us in forming judgments and making decisions.

Our heavy responsibilities carry with them the commitment to do our very best to be deserving of the special trust placed in us. Congress has given our Agency and each of us the task of providing the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear materials to our fellow citizens in such a manner that the public health and safety will be protected, and the common defense and security of our country will be maintained. Working together and, ever mindful of these serious responsibilities, let us pledge to do our best to be worthy of this special trust and confidence from our fellow citizens.


Lando W. Zech, Jr.
Chairman