

POLICY ISSUE
INFORMATION

April 25, 2014

SECY-14-0050

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: Mark A. Satorius
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: STATUS OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S
RESPONSE TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Commission of the status of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) Open Government Plan, dated April 7, 2010, the addendum to the plan dated April 9, 2012, and to provide a second addendum to the plan that will be published by June 1, 2014.

SUMMARY:

This paper transmits the second biennial addendum (enclosed) to the agency's original Open Government Plan (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML100980489) that the NRC staff published in response to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directive M-10-06, dated December 8, 2009. In accordance with current OMB guidance, the staff will publish the addendum on the NRC's Open Government Web page by June 1, 2014. This paper reports on the agency's progress in meeting the commitments outlined in its open government plans.

BACKGROUND:

On March 10, 2010, the staff informed the Commission through SECY-10-0025, "Status of NRC's Response to the Open Government Directive," of its action taken in response to OMB's Open Government Directive, issued in December 2009. The directive addressed action in three distinct areas: (1) publishing Government information online, (2) improving the quality

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of Government information, and (3) creating and institutionalizing a culture of open government. In the directive, each agency was asked to develop an Open Government Plan to serve as a public roadmap to detail how the agency would incorporate open government principles into its core mission objectives. The NRC published its Open Government Plan on April 7, 2010, (revised June 7, 2010). The OMB directive also called for each agency to update its plan every 2 years. The agency published the first addendum to its Open Government Plan on April 9, 2012.

DISCUSSION:

The NRC's Open Government Plan has served the agency well as a roadmap for guiding its Open Government program. In line with the directive, the plan addresses how the NRC will improve transparency and further integrate public participation and collaboration into its activities.

In 2010, the NRC's Open Government program focused on enhancing stakeholder engagement, publishing high-value datasets, and building a foundation for work to be done in 2011.

In 2011, the NRC introduced social media technology—launching the NRC blog in January, Twitter in August, and the NRC YouTube channel in September. The agency continued publishing high-value datasets, and the NRC dataset of U.S. nuclear power plant inspection reports received special recognition by the Data.gov initiative. The agency launched a significantly redesigned public Web site with greatly improved search capabilities, which was recognized as “a gold mine of information” in a 2012 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

The NRC's Open Government program over the past 2 years has continued to grow the agency's social media program, provide improved and timely access to information for stakeholders, and enhance collaboration with NRC partners.

The NRC is pleased that it has been able to meet or exceed each goal it established in its Open Government Plan. The following discussions on transparency, participation, collaboration, and flagship initiatives highlight the NRC's accomplishments to date and identify goals for the Open Government program over the next 2 years.

Transparency

Transparency promotes accountability by providing the public with information about the NRC's activities. More specifically, public stakeholders must have timely access to clear and understandable information on the NRC's role, processes, activities, and decision making.

Over the past 2 years, the agency focused on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. The 2011 event at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan placed additional focus on the agency's FOIA program. The NRC completed a FOIA business process improvement program and approved additional investments in technology. It also received recognition for the agency's FOIA program in a Center for Effective Government report. The agency continues to maintain its public Web site as the central information portal now providing provisions for developers to access the NRC Web site, and it plans to provide a mobile friendly Web site. The agency is modernizing the management of its records and modernizing processes to make

information capture and categorization more complete and transparent, while also developing new file plans, records categorization, and retention schedules for use in records capture.

These initiatives to further strengthen the NRC's focus on transparency are discussed in the 2014–2015 Open Government Plan Addendum.

Participation

Participation encourages and enables members of the public to contribute ideas and expertise so that the NRC can make regulatory decisions with the benefit of information from a wide range of stakeholders. These stakeholders must have meaningful opportunities to participate in the NRC's regulatory processes.

The NRC continues to grow its social media program. It increased subscriber and viewer rates for agency social media platforms—at times nearly doubling previous years' statistics—launched a pilot live discussion platform known as NRC Chat, and updated the agency's Crisis Communication Plan to reflect the addition of social media tools to communicate event and incident information. In addition, the NRC actively participated in the Federal Government Social Media Community of Practice and hired a social media specialist. In 2014, the agency is pursuing the use of Facebook. It has made changes to improve the public's ability to participate in the NRC's regulatory processes. The staff revised the "Documents for Comments" Web page to be a one-stop location for rulemaking actions and other documents open for comment and added more subscription-based services to help the public stay current on rulemaking activities. The agency is enhancing stakeholder involvement in public meetings, employing Web streaming and conferencing to allow participation (regardless of location), using Twitter to allow the public to track meeting events, and enabling meeting feedback to be sent by smartphone or computer.

These initiatives to provide stakeholders additional opportunities to participate in the NRC's decision making processes are discussed in the 2014–2015 Open Government Plan Addendum.

Collaboration

Collaboration improves Government effectiveness by encouraging partnerships and cooperation across Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments and with international regulatory authorities.

The NRC continued to enhance its collaboration with State and Tribal Governments. It began conducting Webinars for Agreement State partners and continued to support Agreement State partners in their efforts to promote safety culture to their licensees. The NRC also continued to conduct various forms of outreach to State and Tribal Governments on topics of mutual interest. In an effort to increase the effectiveness of communications, consultations, and coordination with Tribal Governments, the NRC began to develop an agency-wide Tribal Policy Statement and to update the NRC Tribal Protocol Manual. The staff conducted related outreach to solicit input from Tribal Governments and the public.

The agency has continued to enhance its collaboration with the international community. It has in place arrangements to exchange technical information with nuclear safety agencies in more than 42 countries and has significant participation of Commission and senior level staff members in international meetings focusing on a variety of topics. The NRC also has placed an increased focus on the sharing of information with Canadian and Mexican counterparts and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) subsequent to the Fukushima accident.

These initiatives to strengthen collaboration with the NRC's regulatory partners are discussed in the 2014–2015 Open Government Plan Addendum.

Flagship Initiative

The agency's 2012–2013 Open Government Plan Addendum, published April 9, 2012, identified the staff's flagship initiative as Mobile NRC. The plan noted:

The NRC has selected Mobile NRC as its flagship initiative to expand the agency's stakeholder community and engage a broader public audience by promoting and taking advantage of new mobile-friendly capabilities. The use of the Worldwide Web and mobile technologies has become commonplace, providing more creative and cost effective ways to engage current and new stakeholders in the agency's regulatory processes. The NRC's flagship initiative will focus on employing these technologies to foster public engagement.

On May 23, 2012, President Obama issued an executive memorandum, "Building a 21st Century Digital Government," to all Federal agencies to harness the power of technology to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of digital service to the American people by enabling Government services through mobile access applications (i.e. to build a Digital Government Strategy). With direction and guidance from the Federal CIO (Chief Information Officer) Council and OMB, the NRC established a digital Government taskforce to collect and review opportunities that would help the agency provide information in formats readable by customers and to identify opportunities for applications suitable for mobile devices. In an effort to capture as complete a picture of opportunities as possible that fit the needs of stakeholders, the agency solicited feedback from a wide range of external stakeholders and identified internal stakeholders within the agency from different functional, geographic, mission, and support areas. As a result of these efforts, 44 potential digital Government opportunities were identified and categorized as either a primary, secondary, or tertiary opportunity. Phase One of the project focused on developing and submitting the 2014 implementation plan for the 10 "primary" applications identified. That task was completed on May 23, 2013, and in the first quarter of FY 2014 the NRC deployed one of the applications (Public Meeting Feedback System Mobile Web).

The NRC's digital Government strategy is further discussed in the 2014–2015 Open Government Addendum.

RESOURCES:

NRC offices are already addressing actions required to advance the NRC's initiatives under the Open Government Directive. Some of these actions are and can be implemented with existing agency resources. Resources for additional planned actions, such as increased use of Web-based technologies to transform NRC interactions with stakeholders and the public, will be addressed using the NRC's planning, budgeting, and performance management process.

COORDINATION:

The Office of the General Counsel has reviewed this paper and has no legal objection. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this Commission paper for resource implications and has no objections.

/RA by D. Ash for/

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Enclosure:
Open Government Plan Addendum

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