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NRC Reorganizes Materials and Waste Programs

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has combined its two nuclear materials and waste program offices into one, completing a restructuring directed by the Commission in July to help the agency position itself to complete its work most effectively in the materials, waste and environmental areas.

Effective Oct. 5, programs housed in the Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs and the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards are merged. The new office will retain the name of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards or NMSS, an office established by Congress when it created the NRC in 1974. The merger reflects changes in the NRC's materials and waste management workload and an effort to integrate regulation of the front and back ends of the nuclear fuel cycle, as well as the agency's goal to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

NRC's materials and waste programs include many activities such as licensing facilities and devices that use radioactive materials; event assessment; source security; state and tribal programs; intergovernmental liaison and rulemaking; environmental review; waste management; the nuclear fuel cycle from uranium recovery through conversion, enrichment and fabrication; spent fuel storage, radioactive materials transportation; power plant and materials facility decommissioning, and environmental remediation.

NMSS was split into the two offices in 2006, with FSME focused in part on coordinating with the increasing number of Agreement States that regulate radioactive materials. NMSS was focused on high-level waste management, storage and disposal in preparation for receiving the Yucca Mountain repository application, as well as regulating new fuel cycle facilities. Today, an increasing number of nuclear plants are moving to decommissioning, and the focus is shifting to long-term waste storage and disposal strategies. These functions will now all be housed in NMSS.

"The realignment will help us meet these demands while maintaining our ability to protect public health and safety and the environment," said Mark Satorius, Executive Director for Operations. "We fully expect these changes to make us more efficient and improve our communications both inside and outside of the agency."

Catherine Haney has been named director of the merged organization with Scott Moore as deputy director. Senior staff include Laura Dudes, director of the Division of Materials Safety and State Agreements; Mark Lombard, director of the Division of Spent Fuel Management; Marissa Bailey, director of the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety, Safeguards and Environmental Review; Larry Camper,

director of the Division of Decommissioning, Uranium Recovery and Waste Programs; Josephine Piccone, director of the Yucca Mountain Directorate; and Andy Imboden, director of the Program Planning, Budgeting and Program Analysis staff.