

December 30, 2014

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of December 1, 2014, regarding recent activity associated with the Convention on Nuclear Safety and accelerating implementation of the Fukushima Near-Term Task Force recommendations.

The United States is viewed globally as a leader in strengthening domestic and international nuclear safety regulatory standards. Media reports that the United States opposes changes to the Convention because of cost issues related to safety upgrades are not correct.

The NRC is part of the U.S. delegation, led by the Department of State, which is in the process of preparing for a February 2015 diplomatic conference to discuss the Convention on Nuclear Safety and make a decision on whether the Convention should be amended. Earlier this year the parties to the Convention – by consensus – adopted revisions to International Atomic Energy Agency guidance documents that include, among other things, provisions designed to address many of the significant concerns arising from the March 2011 accident at Fukushima. While the NRC is not in a position to describe in detail sensitive diplomatic negotiations, recent meetings have revealed that more countries now appear to be questioning whether an amendment of the Convention is necessary to achieve enhanced nuclear safety. For additional information on the upcoming diplomatic conference I encourage you to hear from the Department of State.

The NRC has robust collaborative relationships with its counterparts in Europe and around the world. We have been sharing lessons learned and exchanging information on the safety enhancements the United States is implementing as a result of the accident at Fukushima. The United States has been working closely with our counterparts to ensure that the outcome of the diplomatic conference will reaffirm international commitment to safety, reflect the actions that each country is taking in support of that commitment, and ensure that lessons learned and best practices from implementing these enhancements are reflected in international safety standards.

The NRC has made considerable progress over the last two and a half years implementing lessons learned from the Fukushima accident at U.S. nuclear power plants. We remain focused on the highest-priority activities (Tier 1). Some intermediate activities (Tier 2) have been integrated into activities related to the highest priority actions. The remaining Tier 2 and 3 activities are progressing in line with the agency's established schedules. The NRC and nuclear industry are working to ensure substantial safety enhancements are in place at all plants by the end of 2016.

- 2 -

I hope this information is useful to you. If you have any questions, please contact me or Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Allison M. Macfarlane

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510