

From: Hackett, Edwin
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 11:55 AM
To: dick0645@yahoo.com
Cc: Meador, Sherry
Subject: Response to your email regarding the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS)

Dear Mr. Andrews,

I am responding to your email to the NRC dated 12/18/2014 regarding the ACRS. Based on my review of your email, I have organized the response as follows:

- (1) Composition of the Committee
- (2) Committee Workload and Operating Reactor Focus
- (3) Human Performance Safety Oversight

Composition of the Committee – we strive to keep a balance on the Committee among researchers, academics and those with nuclear power plant experience, to enable appropriate breadth and diversification in advice provided to the Commission. The current balance includes 6 of 13 members who have had significant commercial or naval nuclear power plant operational experience.

Committee Workload and Operating Reactor Focus -The topics for ACRS reviews are primarily assigned in three ways:

- (1) Statutory requirements – ACRS is required by law to review certain agency actions. Examples include, but are not limited to: facility license applications, license renewals, early site permits, standard design certifications and combined licenses
- (2) Self-initiated – ACRS can decide to review certain topics at their own discretion
- (3) Commission-assigned

Historically, the Committee's workload has been primarily dictated by the statutory requirements, but the workload balance also changes over time or in reaction to events (e.g., Fukushima). In a quick review of letter reports written by the Committee in 2014, the majority concerned operating reactor issues. This remains the Committee's primary focus, but these are routinely mixed with other reviews (e.g., new reactors, advanced reactors, fuel cycle facilities) during a typical year. The ACRS Subcommittee structure mirrors this balance with 11 of 20 Subcommittees having a predominantly operating reactor focus.

The ACRS self-initiated workload is generally small compared to the statutory workload. However, in any given year, the Committee typically engages in several subjects on a discretionary basis. Examples from the recent past include an intense focus on post-Fukushima issues, operating plant fire protection, digital instrumentation and control system upgrades, low level waste disposal and containment accident pressure.

Regarding Commission-assigned work, this is typically a small part of the Committee's workload. As an example, in 2014, the Commission made only one specific formal work assignment to the Committee.

Human Performance Safety Oversight – We agree that this is a critically important focus area for nuclear safety. The ACRS Reliability and PRA Subcommittee continues to maintain a keen focus on this area. In 2014, several Subcommittee meetings or portions of Subcommittee meetings were focused on Human Reliability Analysis (HRA) and the Committee wrote a letter report regarding HRA models on May 14, 2014. The Subcommittee also closely follows operational events and NRC inspection findings in this area and is engaged with the NRC staff in providing recommendations to improve the assessment of personnel performance. ACRS will continue to engage vigorously in this area in the future.

Thank you for your interest in the ACRS.

Ed Hackett
Executive Director,
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
USNRC
301-415-7360