

March 21, 2016

The Honorable John Bel Edwards  
Governor of Louisiana  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Governor Edwards:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I would like to extend congratulations to you on your recent inauguration as Governor of the State of Louisiana.

I am writing to request your appointment of a State Liaison Officer to act as the State of Louisiana's primary liaison to the NRC. Mr. Richard Blackwell, Environmental Scientist Supervisor in the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, was previously appointed as State Liaison Officer for Louisiana. I request your written affirmation that you desire Mr. Blackwell to remain as your selected appointee, unless you choose to appoint a new State Liaison Officer.

I am providing you with a copy of the NRC brochure entitled, "State Liaison Officer Program," which provides background information on, and describes the role of, the State Liaison Officer. I am also enclosing a copy of the NRC "2015-2016 Information Digest," which provides information describing the NRC's mission and its regulatory programs.

In 1976, the NRC adopted a recommendation from several State organizations, including the National Governors Association, that each State appoint a single person to act as a liaison to the NRC to help improve Federal/State cooperation. The NRC looks to the Governor-appointed State Liaison Officer to be the primary communication channel between the State and the NRC. The State Liaison Officer serves as the key person in the State to keep the Governor and other State agencies informed about issues under the NRC's jurisdiction (specifically matters addressing nuclear regulation, nuclear security, nuclear emergency preparedness, and radiological public health and safety) and to provide the NRC with State information on particular nuclear safety, security, and environmental issues.

Since inception of the State Liaison Officer Program, State Liaison Officer responsibilities have continued to evolve. Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the NRC increased its security-related communications with the Governor-appointed State Liaison Officers. Your appointed State Liaison Officer will serve as a recipient for sensitive unclassified information, including Safeguards Information (SGI), from the NRC. SGI is a special category of sensitive unclassified information authorized by Section 147 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, to be protected from inadvertent release and unauthorized disclosure. Although SGI is sensitive unclassified information, it is required to be handled and protected in a manner similar to classified National Security Information.

The NRC will keep you informed of our programs and activities through Mr. Blackwell or your other selected appointee. At the same time, we will continue to work with other individuals in Louisiana State agencies with whom we have established relationships. If you or your staff

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have any questions concerning this correspondence or wish to obtain additional information about the State Liaison Officer program, please contact Mr. Daniel Collins, Director, Division of Material Safety, State, Tribal, and Rulemaking Programs, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, at (301) 415-3340 or by e-mail at [Daniel.Collins@nrc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Collins@nrc.gov).

I thank you in advance for your assistance. The Commission looks forward to your response and to continuing an excellent working relationship with the State of Louisiana.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Stephen G. Burns

Enclosures:

1. NRC Brochure, State Liaison Officer Program
2. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission 2015-2016 Information Digest, NUREG-1350, Volume 27

cc: w/o enclosures  
Richard Blackwell, LA Department of Environmental Quality