

D930318

The Honorable Ivan Selin
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Selin:

SUBJECT: ADVANCED BOILING WATER REACTOR (ABWR) REVIEW SCHEDULE

During the 395th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, March 11-12, 1993, we discussed the staff's revised estimate of the schedule (proposed in SECY-93-041) for completing its review of the ABWR design. We also had the benefit of the documents referenced.

We note that in SECY-93-041, the time proposed for our review of the Final Safety Evaluation Report (FSER) is one month. In our July 18, 1991, report to you on "Schedules for Advanced Reactor Reviews," we agreed with the staff's estimate of three months for completing our review of the FSER. It is still our view that three months will be needed to perform a meaningful review, given the proposed schedule for transmitting the information to us.

Regarding our present ABWR review status, our work on the ABWR design certification application stalled in November 1992, pending the development of additional technical information by General Electric Nuclear Energy (GE) and decisions by the NRC staff on a number of important areas such as:

design acceptance criteria/inspections, tests, analyses and acceptance criteria, digital control systems, control room and human factor provisions, and severe accident/probabilistic risk assessment considerations

interface requirements and representative conceptual designs for uncertified portions of the design

technical resolution of Unresolved Safety Issues and Generic Safety Issues as required by 10 CFR 52.47

closure of open and confirmatory items in the October 1992 draft of the FSER

closure of open items and concerns from the ACRS Advanced Boiling Water Reactors Subcommittee meetings of August 19, October 21, and November 18-19, 1992

Our subcommittee meetings with the NRC staff and GE were, in general, limited to consideration of the October 1992 draft of the FSER and the initial submittal and first twenty amendments (through March 13, 1992) of the ABWR Standard Safety Analysis Report (SSAR). We have not met with the staff or GE on these matters since November 1992, although we have planned a subcommittee meeting on

severe accidents on March 18, 1993.

We will meet again to complete our review when the staff and GE provide us with reasonably complete final documentation for our consideration. There are now several additional voluminous amendments to the SSAR to consider, and extensive revision of the FSER is likely. From the nature of past ACRS open items and concerns on the ABWR and the uncertainty concerning their resolution, we believe that significant problems may still persist.

If it would expedite the schedule, we would be willing to meet with the staff and GE to review portions of the final FSER and associated SSAR beyond Amendment 20 as they are completed and made available. This would ensure a more timely resolution of any remaining concerns and could shorten the three months otherwise needed for our review of the advance copy of the complete FSER package (referred to in SECY-93-041) and preparation of our final report required by 10 CFR 52.53.

Sincerely,

Paul Shewmon
Chairman

References:

1. Letter dated February 9, 1993, from Dennis M. Crutchfield, NRR, to Paul Shewmon, Chairman, ACRS, Subject: Review Schedule for the Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (ABWR)
2. SECY-93-041, dated February 18, 1993, for the Commissioners from James M. Taylor, Executive Director for Operations, Subject: Advanced Boiling Water Reactor (ABWR) Review Schedule