

D931110

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

Dear Chairman Selin:

SUBJECT: SECY-93-289, "ISSUANCE OF THE DRAFT PREAPPLICATION SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT (PSER) FOR THE POWER REACTOR INNOVATIVE SMALL MODULE (PRISM) LIQUID-METAL REACTOR"

During the 403rd meeting of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, November 4-6, 1993, we heard presentations by representatives of the NRC staff and General Electric Nuclear Energy on the subject SECY paper that proposes the issuance of a draft final Preapplication Safety Evaluation Report (PSER) for the Power Reactor Innovative Small Module (PRISM) Reactor for comment. We also had the benefit of the documents referenced.

Consistent with the Commission's advanced reactor policy, the staff has, to the extent feasible, used existing regulations to formulate criteria and procedures for review of this design. Where necessary the staff has created additional criteria and procedures, following the guidance furnished by the Commission in the Staff Requirements Memorandum dated July 30, 1993, that dealt with key policy issues for advanced reactors. Because the staff review was based on a conceptual design, the PSER did not, nor was it intended to, result in an approval of the design. Instead it identified certain key safety issues, provided some guidance on applicable licensing criteria, assessed the adequacy of the preapplicant's research and development programs, and concluded that no obvious impediments to licensing the PRISM design had been identified.

Although our own review of the PSER was less detailed than would have been appropriate for a safety evaluation report on an actual application, we believe that the staff has satisfactorily fulfilled its role in the preapplication process. We agree with the staff's proposal to provide the PSER to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Dr. William J. Shack did not participate in the Committee's deliberation regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

J. Ernest Wilkins, Jr.
Chairman

References:

1. SECY-93-289, dated October 19, 1993, Memorandum from James M. Taylor, NRC Executive Director for Operations, for the Commissioners, Subject: Issuance of the Draft Preapplication

Safety Evaluation Report (PSER) for the Power Reactor Innovative Small Module (PRISM) Liquid-Metal Reactor

2. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NUREG-1368, "Preapplication Safety Evaluation Report (PSER) for the Power Reactor Innovative Small Module (PRISM) Liquid Metal Reactor," October 1993
3. Staff Requirements Memorandum dated July 30, 1993, from S. Chilk, Secretary of the Commission, NRC, to J. M. Taylor, NRC Executive Director for Operations, Subject: SECY-93-092 - Issues Pertaining to the Advanced Reactor (PRISM, MHTGR, and PIUS) and CANDU 3 Designs and Their Relationship to Current Regulatory Requirements