

D911218

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

Dear Chairman Selin:

SUBJECT: NRC STAFF APPROACH TO THE REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF PERSONNEL
AND ADVANCED CONTROL ROOMS IN FUTURE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
AS DESCRIBED IN SECY-91-272

During the 380th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, December 12-14, 1991, we discussed with the NRC staff its approach to the review of the role of personnel and advanced control rooms in future nuclear power plants as described in SECY-91-272. The Committee, as well as several ACRS subcommittees, has been meeting with the staff, EPRI, and the advanced light water reactor (ALWR) vendors concerning these issues as a part of the Committee's overall review of ALWRs. We also had the benefit of the document referenced.

In our report of November 14, 1991, discussing SECY-91-273, "Review of Vendors' Test Program to Support the Design Certification of Passive Light Water Reactors," we recommended that the staff develop a set of General Human Factors Criteria for ALWRs as a way of defining what is needed in order to make a design certification safety determination. It appears to us that the staff is currently using the man/machine interface requirements of the EPRI ALWR Requirements Document as a major part of this definition. The EPRI Requirements Document contains many requirements that the utility industry considers desirable for efficient and reliable operation of ALWR plants, but that go beyond what is needed for the staff's safety determination. A line needs to be drawn between these two types of requirements.

The staff told us during our meeting that it has revised its thinking on this matter as a result of the plan to deal with this and other issues through the design acceptance criteria (DAC) process. We expect to meet with the staff during January 1992 to discuss its draft DAC for the ABWR control room and will have additional comments based on our review of that document.

Sincerely,

David A. Ward
Chairman

Reference:

SECY-91-272 dated August 27, 1991, for the Commissioners from James M. Taylor, NRC Executive Director for Operations, Subject: Role of

Personnel and Advanced Control Room in Future Nuclear Power Plants