

D850813

Honorable Nunzio J. Palladino
Chairman
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Dr. Palladino:

SUBJECT: ACRS ADVISORY ROLE ON THE NRC HIGH LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE
PROGRAM

During its 304th meeting, August 8-10, 1985, the ACRS continued discussions of its role in advising the NRC on matters pertaining to the civilian high-level radioactive waste (HLW) management program. Specific attention was directed to your request of July 12, 1985, to the ACRS Executive Director, that we comment on the staff's proposal as outlined in SECY-85-197. This proposal recommends that review of the HLW Program be conducted by the full ACRS and a new standing committee under the auspices of the National Academy of Engineering. Also available to us were the comments prepared by the Office of Policy Evaluation on the NRC Staff's proposal.

If sufficient resources can be made available, the ACRS is willing to expand its activities to provide advice to the Commission on the full range of matters pertaining to the HLW program. We estimate that the required added annual resource needs will be about \$100,000 for travel and program support plus 4 FTE. We do not believe, however, as was suggested by the NRC Staff, that it would be desirable or practical to significantly alter the current membership of the Committee in order to accomplish this task.

Should you decide to establish a separate, new advisory committee, you might consider assigning to it the responsibility for providing advice on areas beyond those covered in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Such areas include low-level radioactive waste management, uranium mill tailings, transportation of radioactive materials, and related NRC research.

Regardless of the approach taken, the primary objective should be to provide a source for independent advice to the Commission on the NRC's waste management activities, rather than to provide a source for peer review. The latter can be better accomplished through the use of consultants and expertise within the NRC Staff.

We hope these comments will prove helpful. Should questions develop or if we can be of further assistance in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,

David A. Ward,
Chairman

References:

1. Memorandum for R. F. Fraley, Executive Director, ACRS, from N. J. Palladino, NRC Chairman, Subject: ACRS Budget and Role in Radwaste, dated July 12, 1985
2. SECY-85-197 for the Commissioners from W. J. Dircks, Executive Director for Operations, Subject: Advisory Committee for Overseeing the High-Level Radioactive Waste Repository Program, dated May 31, 1985
3. Memorandum for the Commissioners from J. E. Zerbe, Director, Office of Policy Evaluation, NRC, Subject: Advisory Committee for Overseeing the High-Level Radioactive Waste Repository Program, dated June 24, 1985

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