



DSI-6 (32)  
**Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc.**

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November 27, 1996

Mr. John C. Hoyle  
Secretary of the Commission  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

ATTN: Chief of Docketing and Services Branch

Dear Mr. Hoyle:

Enclosed are the comments from the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc. (CRCPD) Board of Directors on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Strategic Assessment and Rebaselining issues papers. The CRCPD is a national organization dedicated to radiation protection and whose membership is made up of personnel from state, territorial, and local radiation control programs throughout the country.

The activities of the NRC, especially in the radioactive materials area, have a significant impact on state and local radiation control programs. We have concentrated our comments on those issues papers that most directly impact the future of the programs represented in CRCPD. Comments are enclosed on the following Direction Setting Issues Papers:

DSI 2	Oversight of the Department of Energy
DSI 4	NRC's Relationship with Agreement States
DSI 5	Low Level Waste
DSI 6	High Level Radioactive Waste
DSI 7	Materials/Medical Oversight
DSI 9	Decommissioning - Non-Reactor
DSI 12	Risk-Informed, Performance-Based Regulation
DSI 13	Role of Industry
DSI 14	Public Communication Initiatives
DSI 21	Fees
DSI 22	Research
DSI 23	Enhancing Regulatory Excellence
DSI 24	Power Reactor Decommissioning

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these issues and your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

*William P. Dornsife*

William P. Dornsife  
Chairman, CRCPD

Enclosures

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
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**CRCPD Board of Directors  
Comments on**

**NRC DIRECTION SETTING ISSUE PAPER 6**

**HIGH LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE**

One of the most difficult questions posed to a low level radioactive waste (LLRW) siting board is why independent spent fuel storage is permitted at a nuclear power plant site, but a LLRW facility on site is discouraged. Assured Storage, as a concept for managing LLRW is not even fully explored, but ISFSIs are permitted. This seems contradictory. If the Commission chooses Option 5 (Take a position on the Storage of Spent Fuel) and advocates at-reactor storage these apparent contradictions will have to be explained.

As frustrating as it is to watch the Department of Energy's slow progress toward establishing a national repository, for the NRC to assume a leadership role as in Option 1 (approach Congress and the administration to refocus the national program) would mean that the agency had crossed the line from regulator to proponent.

The key specific barriers to the HLW program's success range from technical issues, political issues, public mistrust, and budgetary constraints. The NRC can work to help resolve the technical issues, and should be proactive in providing public education to overcome misinformation. However, it should not enter into the political arena to advocate for the HLW program. That can only lead to increased mistrust on the part of the public. As for interceding on the budgetary constraints put on the HLW program, it appears that all interested parties could use some help in putting risks and costs in perspective. Examining the costs of the HLW program and the radiation risks from the spent fuel, and comparing these risks and costs to other regulatory programs, such as the regulation of radioactive materials in medicine, LLRW, nuclear power plants, x-ray machines, and radon should help to frame the issue for the decision makers - the general public and Congress.