

**Approval for Estimated Conference Spending in
Excess of \$500,000 for a Single Conference per
Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-17-08,
“Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting Efficient
Spending to Support Agency Operations”**

As Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I hereby approve estimated spending exceeding \$500,000 for the 2020 Regulatory Information Conference (RIC). The NRC will hold the next annual RIC in March 2020.

For the reasons detailed below, I have determined that exceptional circumstances exist and that spending more than \$500,000 on hosting the 2020 RIC is the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose.

The NRC's mission is to license and regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment. The RIC supports this mission, as well as the NRC's commitment to conduct its work openly and transparently, by providing a unique forum that brings together diverse groups of stakeholders to inform them of significant and timely policy decisions and regulatory oversight activities.

The RIC is highly valued by both agency and external stakeholders for its technical and educational content. In addition, the RIC offers an environment in which the NRC staff and stakeholders share relevant information; exchange views and perspectives; and discuss challenging safety, security, and policy issues facing the agency. As we continue to learn from recent events in the nuclear community, this forum is crucial to the agency's mission.

Since its inception in 1987, the RIC has become one of the premier nuclear conferences in the world. It is widely attended, and the 2019 RIC brought together nearly 2,300 participants representing 33 countries. Participants include members of the public; Federal, State, and local government officials; nuclear safety regulators from other nations; experts from the national laboratories; advocacy groups; media representatives; licensees; vendors; and other interested stakeholders. The technical program features nuclear experts from across the agency, as well as external speakers from industry, academia, public interest groups, and the international community. This educational conference also provides a unique opportunity for attendees to hear firsthand the views of each member of the Commission related to emerging regulatory issues and policy matters affecting the agency.

The RIC gives the NRC the opportunity to cultivate international relationships, influence nuclear safety on a global scale, and foster the exchange of best practices in the nuclear arena. The face-to-face interaction with members of industry, private interest groups, and other stakeholders is vital and provides wide-ranging opportunities to network, share ideas, raise issues or concerns, search for solutions, and establish relationships with colleagues from around the world.

Successfully executing such a large and complex conference requires extensive coordination and effective management of resources. The Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) cosponsor the RIC. Both NRR and RES are dedicated to the NRC's commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship. The NRC is continually

Enclosure

identifying ways to reduce conference costs. NRR, as the lead office, diligently scrutinizes and monitors the planning, logistics, and implementation of the RIC to ensure that the agency spends appropriate funds in the most cost-effective, efficient manner.

The objectives and work requirements of the RIC cannot be accomplished under any of the current enterprisewide contracts; therefore, the NRC has in place two contracts to assist in executing the RIC: (1) the planning and logistical support contract, a small business contract under the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program, and (2) the conference facility contract. These contracts cover Web development, registration, audiovisual support, onsite logistics, and conference facility meeting space. The costs associated with these two contracts are approximately \$804,000. The costs for RIC 2019 increased from RIC 2018 due to exercising the graphics option within the contract which supported the RIC mobile application including live polling. Further, additional funding was needed to support a significant increase in translator service requests via the agency's Limited English Proficiency contract.

The NRC incurs additional RIC-related costs of approximately \$96,000 for support services. To help cover these costs, the NRC uses currently placed contracts from the Office of Administration, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and other offices to facilitate agencywide coordination of technical program content and development, Web hosting and support, conference material preparation, preregistration activities, and onsite staffing. The RIC takes advantage of existing NRC enterprisewide contracts for support and services to include registration system security, Web hosting, Web streaming, captioning, videography, photography, transcription, video teleconferencing, onsite physical security, limited English proficiency and reasonable accommodations, and shipping and delivery activities.

The conference facility is close to a Metrorail station. The proximity of both NRC Headquarters and public transportation greatly reduces travel and per diem costs for most Federal conference attendees, as well as the travel costs for planners during conference preparation. The benefits of locating the conference near the NRC and the Metrorail are threefold: (1) NRC staff members can attend only the conference portions that are valuable to them and return to their workplaces for the remainder of each day, (2) the NRC can use its headquarters facility for some of the needed additional meeting space at no additional cost, and (3) the NRC staff and international counterparts can conduct nonconference business that might otherwise require international travel, further reducing NRC travel costs.

The compelling purpose achieved by the RIC constitutes exceptional circumstances. On this basis, I am confident that the costs associated with executing the 2020 RIC are valid and prudent. Therefore, in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-17-08, "Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," dated November 25, 2016, I hereby approve expenses exceeding \$500,000 on a single conference for the 2020 RIC.



Kristine L. Svinicki, Chairman



Date