



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

July 17, 2019

Captain John Gilstad, Director  
Armed Forces Radiobiology  
Research Institute  
National Naval Medical Center  
8901 Wisconsin Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20889-5603

SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES RADIOBIOLOGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE – NUCLEAR  
REGULATORY COMMISSION REACTIVE SAFETY CONSCIOUS WORK  
ENVIRONMENT ISSUE OF CONCERN FOLLOW-UP INTERIM INSPECTION  
REPORT NO. 05000170/2019-202-0004

Dear Captain Gilstad:

From April 9-11, 2019, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conducted a reactive inspection at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) reactor facility. The purpose of this inspection was to conduct a follow-up assessment of the safety conscious work environment (SCWE) attribute of AFRRI's safety culture.

The inspection assessed the corrective actions implemented to address: (1) the weaknesses in AFRRI's SCWE identified in NRC Inspection Report No 05000170/2018450; (2) AFRRI's staff current knowledge of methods to raise safety concerns within AFRRI; (3) AFRRI's staff current willingness to raise safety concerns to their management without fear of retaliation; and (4) AFRRI's staff current perception of management's support of a healthy SCWE at AFRRI. The NRC inspectors conducted interviews with AFRRI staff having responsibilities related to the operation and security of the research reactor, as well as those with responsibilities for handling NRC licensed materials.

The NRC inspectors were unable to reach a final determination regarding the status of the SCWE at AFRRI due to lack of empirical data in the climate surveys performed by AFRRI. On May 9, 2019, AFRRI informed the NRC that a third party will be contracted to conduct a SCWE survey and that the results and preliminary action plan would be available to the NRC in August 2019. This inspection will remain open until the NRC has received the analysis of the SCWE survey conducted by the third-party evaluator and AFRRI's planned corrective actions, if any.

In accordance with Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 2.390, "Public inspections, exemptions, requests for withholding," a copy of this letter and your response will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the NRC's document system ADAMS. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room). To the extent

possible, your written response, if provided, should not include any personal privacy or proprietary, information so that it can be made available to the Public without redaction.

If you have any questions concerning this inspection, please contact Ashley Ferguson at 301-415-6638, or by electronic mail at [Ashley.Ferguson@nrc.gov](mailto:Ashley.Ferguson@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Anthony J. Mendiola, Chief  
Research and Test Reactors Oversight Branch  
Division of Licensing Projects  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-170  
License No. R-84

cc: See next page

Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute

Docket No. 50-170

cc:

Director, Maryland Office of Planning  
301 West Preston Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Environmental Program Manager III  
Radiological Health Program  
Air & Radiation Management Adm.  
Maryland Dept of the Environment  
1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 750  
Baltimore, MD 21230-1724

Director  
Air & Radiation Management Adm.  
Maryland Dept of the Environment  
1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 710  
Baltimore, MD 21230

Test, Research and Training  
Reactor Newsletter  
Attention: Amber Johnson  
Dept of Materials Science and Engineering  
University of Maryland  
4418 Stadium Drive  
College Park, MD 20742-2115

Manager  
Nuclear Programs  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Tawes B-3  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Mr. Walter Dale Tomlinson  
Interim Reactor Facility Director  
Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute  
4555 South Palmer Road, Building 42  
Bethesda, MD 20889-5648

SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES RADIOBIOLOGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE – NUCLEAR  
 REGULATORY COMMISSION REACTIVE SAFETY CONSCIOUS WORK  
 ENVIRONMENT ISSUE OF CONCERN FOLLOW-UP INTERIM INSPECTION  
 REPORT NO. 05000170/2019-202-0004 DATE: JULY 17, 2019

**DISTRIBUTION:**

PUBLIC	MBalazik, NRR	AFerguson, NRR
PROB r/f	MTakacs, NRR	DWillis, OE/AT
GCasto, NRR	AMendiola, NRR	ABurritt, R-I
NParker, NRR	RidsNrrDlpPrlb	MKeefe-Forsyth, NRR
RidsNrrDlpProb	CMontgomery, NRR	R1AllegationResource

**ADAMS Accession No.: ML19165A292**                      **\*concurring via email**                      **NRC-002**

OFFICE	NRR/DLP/PROB*	NRR/DLP/PROB	NRR/DIRS/IRAB*	OE/AT*
NAME	AFerguson	MTakacs	MKeefe-Forsyth	DWillis
DATE	6/18/2019	7/3/2019	5/29/2019	5/29/2019
OFFICE	NRR/DLP/PROB*	NRR/DLP/PROB		
NAME	NParker	AMendiola		
DATE	6/18/2019	7/17/2019		

**OFFICIAL RECORD COPY**