



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20586
FEB 14 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Distribution

FROM: Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: NRR OFFICE LETTER NO. 23
NRR REVIEW OF RESEARCH INFORMATION LETTERS (RILs)

Commission Action Paper SECY 77-130, December 6, 1977, "Procedures for Processing User Office Research Requirements," sets forth a procedure for the transfer and review of research information. The action paper identifies critical points in the process at which specific actions should be taken by RES and the user office.

This office letter provides further guidance on the procedure to be followed by the NRR staff. The purpose of this guidance to the staff is to establish earlier, better staff coordination on the use of the research results. Guidance is also provided below for completing the form, "Official Program Office Comments on Utilization or Value of RIL to the Regulatory Process," which accompanies the Research Information Letters (RILs). A copy of this form is enclosed.

Initiation of RIL

The action paper states that upon completion of a substantial, coherent and reasonably complete body of research work, representatives of RES and the user office will meet to evaluate the work. I have been informed that RES will generally plan to have a draft RIL ready for review at this meeting and NRR staff will be expected to provide appropriate comments on the draft RIL at the meeting. At this time it is the responsibility of the appropriate NRR Assistant Director to provide RES with our position on whether or not the RIL should be finalized. Based on this meeting RES will decide whether or not the research results

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merit the preparation of a RIL. This determination should be made only on the technical merits of the work as it relates to the licensing process. In some cases, a RIL can have direct applicability to the licensing process; in others it can provide valuable background information or enhanced understanding of various safety, safeguards or environmental aspects of our regulatory process. The section of the draft RIL which discusses the applicability of the results and their impact on the regulatory process should be carefully reviewed by NRR and RES staff at this time prior to preparation of the final version of the RIL. Since the commitment of NRR resources for the review of a RIL is essentially made at this time, the decision to proceed with a RIL should be made known to the appropriate NRR Assistant Director. When it is decided that a RIL is in order, RES will prepare the Research Information Letter and send it to the user office for review and comment. At this time an NRR staff member, preferably an NRR member of the appropriate Research Review Group, should be designated as the point of contact for NRR.

Review of RIL and Final Action

Upon receipt of a formal RIL by NRR it is assigned to the appropriate division for action. Each RIL should be reviewed for accuracy and completeness. During the same period that the RIL is being reviewed, any discussions needed to clarify technical matters or to followup on specific technical issues should be held. Finally, decisions will be made by the Assistant Directors from RES and NRR concerning proceeding with position papers, ACRS briefings and press releases.

Completion of Research Results Utilization Form

A. Application to Regulatory Process

This section should contain a brief technical discussion of the purpose of the research and how the research relates to a regulatory requirement. The discussion should contain sufficient detail that reference to supporting documentation is not needed. A description of the application of the research results should follow and it should include a characterization such as: (1) The results were used in a particular environmental or safety review, an SER, or a hearing. (2) The results either confirmed or showed a need to revise our technical basis used in licensing reviews, Regulations, Regulatory Guides, SRPs, Technical Specifications, etc. (3) The research produced a code, seismotectonic provinces

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A. Application to Regulatory Process (continued)

map, etc., to be used in licensing reviews and provided the staff independent audit capability. (4) The results added to the general knowledge of the staff even though it may not be directly applicable to the licensing process.

B. Impact of Results

This section should describe the impact of the research results and it should include a characterization such as: (1) The results either confirmed the margin of safety in our current licensing assumptions or increased our data base or our understanding of a phenomenon but have no direct impact on licensing. (2) The results led to a relaxation of an existing requirement or showed there is additional margin in the operating limits of certain reactors. (3) The results led to a new requirement or the tightening of an existing requirement. For those cases which lead to a change in our requirements, the magnitude of the change should be specified, if possible.

Comments on Style

In completing these forms it should be remembered that they represent NRR's comments on the research results. They should therefore be objective and technical in nature and be written in a tone which applies generally to NRR. Personal references should be avoided.



Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
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-----OFFICIAL PROGRAM OFFICE COMMENTS ON UTILIZATION OR VALUE OF BIL TO THE REGULATORY PROCESS-----

BIL.# DATE ISSUED BRG BRG_CHAIRPERSON:

BIL TITLE:

PROGRAM OFFICE CONTACT NAME DATE:

DESCRIBE APPLICATION TO REGULATORY PROCESS:

DESCRIBE IMPACT OF RESULTS:

COMMENTS/REMARKS:

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