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May 28, 1980

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NUCLEAR REG. COMM.
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
REACTOR SAFEGUARDS

Dr. Dade Muller
c/o Peter Tam
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Comm.
Advisory Comm. on Reactor
Safeguards
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Dade:

I have reviewed the revised draft emergency plans proposed by the NRC. They have improved the draft over the previous one but there are still a number of questions. I feel that the off-site plan would be much better if it were coordinated, through the FEMA, with other types of emergencies that occur much more frequently. This would provide a plan many parts of which are exercised regularly and which would allow the expenditures to be more effectively used and could cover accidents involving other sources of radiation (such as transportation) as well as natural disasters or chemical accidents.

I am concerned that the emergency planning become such a rigid pattern to meet the objectives listed that reaction will become automatic without thorough consideration of the situation. This is particularly true of the 15 minute notification requirement. While it is stated on page 39 that the "responsibility for activating such a public notification system shall remain with the appropriate government authorities" the fact that it exists may encourage its use.

A few detailed comments follow.

1. pp. 5, item 2. The 15 minute notification requirement remains on pp. 18-19 of the final rule. This time is "justified" by statements such as: "drawing it more laxly might compromise public safety"; "The technical basis for this requirement is not without dispute"; "There may never be an accident requiring rigid adherence to the 15-minute notification; every indication is that there will not"; and "However, the essential policy behind emergency planning is to optimize public protection. The 15-minute notification requirement is wholly consistent with that

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policy." These justifications are inconsistent and seem to be more rationalizations than justifications. For example, what is meant by optimization of public protection? What is it optimized against? If there is every indication that it will not be needed, why include it? My point is that a more rational approach to the problem is needed.

2. pp. 7, last parag. The choice of 5 years may cause some problems with states where Governor's can serve only one consecutive term and a large part of the top staff is replaced every four years. I believe that four years would be a more appropriate period.
3. pp. 9, item 3. What is meant by a finding of "no Significant Impact"? Doesn't the commitment of men and resources as well as the noise of notification systems comprise an impact?

Final Rule

4. pp. 18. Some proof that a longer notification time is insufficient to optimize protection should be given.
5. pp. 20, 1st line. In the phrase "... if NRC finds a deficiency ..." does the word "a" mean "any single deficiency"?
6. pp. 22. Are criteria for determining the sizes of the EPZ's for other reactors available?
7. pp. 28, item (5) This item requires the licensee to submit State and local plans within 60 days. Yet the rule does not go into place for 180 days. Does this say that the job of reviewing the plans is twice as hard as preparing them? Shouldn't this be at least 90 days?
8. pp 38, item 2. How does one give a transient population a yearly notice? Why should the times required be a part of this notice? (I assume that times required is the 15 minute period and not the number of times that they will be notified.)
9. pp. 41, 4th line from the bottom. Testing of the public notification system, particularly if it is an alarm such as a siren, once per year could lead to a) panic, if not all people are advised or b) ignoring of the signal after a few years.



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As I indicated at the last meeting, I consider the planning and training of the NRC staff to be at least as important as requiring licensee action. This was well illustrated by TMI and the conflicting information given to the public. I would strongly recommend that the ACRS institute reviews of this aspect.

Sincerely yours,

J. W. Healy

JWH:dl