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For: The Commissioners

From: James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

Subject: REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Purpose: To provide the Commission with an update on the current status
of the Technical Specifications Improvement Program.

Summary: The staff has previously briefed the Commission on the status
of the Technical Specifications Improvement Program. At the last
briefing the staff told the Commission that it expected the new
standard technical specifications to be completed by April 1990.
Several unanticipated problems have prevented the industry and
the staff from meeting this schedule: (1) The number of changes
proposed by the industry was greater than anticipated, and (2) a
very large and time-consuming word processing and editing effort
has been required.

The staff expects to complete the development of the new standard
technical specifications and present the results to ACRS before
the end of 1990. A complete draft will be ready in November
1990. A review and approval process will then take several more
months to complete. The staff now expects to complete work on
the new standard technical specifications in spring 1991. The
staff and the industry groups (the owners groups and NUMARC) are
all giving high priority to completion of the new Standard
Technical Specifications.

Background: Because the Technical Specifications Improvement Program is a
major NRC initiative, the staff has briefed the Commission
several times on the status of this program. This paper provides
yet another update on the staff and the industry effort to bring
this program to fruition.

On February 6, 1987, the Commission issued the interim Policy
Statement on technical specifications improvement. This document
served as the basis for identifying improvements to be made to
the existing standard technical specifications (STS). It

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specified criteria to be used to decide which requirements were to be retained in the technical specifications and which requirements were to be relocated to licensee-controlled documents. It also called for a strong program to implement 10 CFR 50.59 requirements for those items relocated from the technical specifications. Using these criteria, on May 9, 1988, after discussions with the industry, the staff issued letters to the owners groups listing those specifications to be relocated from the STS and those to remain. Based on the guidance of these letters, the owners groups prepared and submitted to the staff proposed new STS. These proposed new STS not only reflected the policy of relocating requirements that did not meet the criteria of the interim Policy Statement but also were written in an improved format from a human factors viewpoint. In addition, the owners groups' submittals contained numerous substantive technical changes that were not part of the original plan for the Technical Specifications Improvement Program.

Throughout this process, the staff briefed the Commission several times. At the most recent briefing, on June 2, 1989, the staff gave the Commission the dates for each owners group submittal and the date the staff anticipated producing the safety evaluation report (SER) for each submittal. The safety evaluations for the new standard technical specifications were to be issued no later than spring 1990.

Since the June 2, 1989, briefing, the staff revised the original schedule.

This paper provides the Commission with the current status of the Technical Specifications Improvement Program, and in particular, the progress made to date and the current schedule for completion.

Discussion:

The staff now plans to complete its review of the five sets of new STS in the spring of 1991. A complete draft for each set will be ready in November 1990. This has been a major staff effort. There are currently 15 members in the Technical Specifications Branch, one senior reactor operator instructor (a foreign-assignee working with the branch), approximately 20 technical experts in other branches (on a part-time basis), and approximately 10 contractors working on the review.

The staff has reviewed approximately 4,100 proposed changes to the technical specifications, held approximately 90 meetings with the owners groups to discuss these changes, and is now preparing approximately 13,000 pages of written text which will comprise the 5 sets of the new STS. A number of these pages are

changed and have required retyping several times as a result of continuing discussions between the staff and the owners groups. The staff, through contractors, is doing all the word processing and editorial work as well as the technical review.

The staff evaluated operator acceptance of the new STS at the NRC Technical Training Center simulator in Chattanooga. (The operators enthusiastically accepted the new STS). The staff also performed its own major review of surveillances required by the technical specifications. The results of this study are incorporated in the new STS and will also be issued to the industry as a line-item improvement. As a parallel effort, as directed by the Commission, the staff is developing guidelines for reviews conducted by licensees under 10 CFR 50.59. Following the NRC staff review, the industry issued a report (ISAC-125) which provides guidance on the performance of reviews required by 10 CFR 50.59. Working with the industry, members of the Technical Specifications Branch briefed all five regions on the work done to date on these 10 CFR 50.59 guidelines.

The staff has also completed its review of all limiting conditions for operation (LCOs) and surveillance requirements. The last major effort, the review of the bases, is now nearing completion. This review has required a large amount of rewriting but should be completed within the next month.

Before reaching agreement on the various technical issues, the staff has held lengthy discussions with the industry. These efforts have been very productive in reducing the number of open issues. However, some open issues will remain between the staff and industry at the time the staff publishes the complete draft STS for comment. These residual open issues will continue to be addressed during the period of public ACRS and CRGR review.

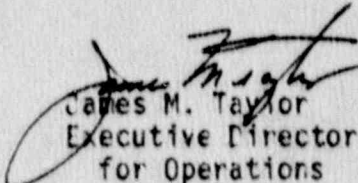
A lead plant from each owners group has been participating in the review of the new STS. The purpose of this participation is to validate the new STS for that plant, that is, to obtain assurance that the generic STS can effectively be applied to an operating reactor of that design.

Following the completion of the generic new STS and the validation effort, the review of the application of the new STS to each of the lead plants will be completed. The staff anticipates that this task will require several months after the work on the new STS is finished.

In summary, because of (1) the large number of technical issues to be resolved that were not originally anticipated, and (2) the large volume of clerical (word processing and editing) work to be completed, the staff has had to revise the schedule

originally provided to the Commission. The staff has nearly completed the review of the new STS for each owners group. In November 1990, drafts (for each owners group) of the new STS are scheduled to be completed. The staff expects to resolve any public comment, complete ACRS and CRGR review and publish the final versions of the new STS in the spring of 1991.

Throughout this effort, the staff has emphasized producing a high quality product. The industry also shares this view. With the task of producing the new STS close to completion, the staff will take the time required to ensure that the final product will be of high quality.


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