December 8, 1994

MEMORANDUM TO: The Chairman
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner de Planque

FROM: James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

Original signed by
James M. Taylor

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR SAFETY RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT
DATED DECEMBER 5, 1994

The attached report addresses the results of the initial review of the CANDU 3 confirmatory research program conducted at the November 7-8, 1994 meeting of the Nuclear Safety Research Review Committee (NSRRC). In conducting its review, the NSRRC received presentations by the applicant (AECLT) as well as RES and NRR staff.

The report notes the early stage of this NSRRC review and emphasizes the consequent preliminary nature of the Committee's comments.

The report draws attention to the general question of what approach is to be used by the NRC in reviewing a design significantly different from LWRs, with which the agency has had its only extensive reactor regulation experience to date. Two major specific questions are (1) to what extent can the Canadian research be accepted without confirmatory research in the U.S. and (2) to what extent NRC research should support areas in which CANDU 3 differs from U.S. experience and even from previous CANDU experience.

The report identifies the positive void coefficient, computerized distributed digital control, and on-line refueling as the fundamental issues for which Canadian plus planned NRC research sufficiency for licensing should receive a further look.

The report counsels obtaining a more detailed NRC understanding of the CANDU 3 design, closer contact with the Canadian regulators (AECB), and continuing detailed analysis of research needs, while noting preliminary NRC staff actions in these directions.

Attachment: Ltr., E. Kintner, NSRRC, to
E. Beckjord, NRC, dated
Dec. 5, 1994

cc: SECY OGC OPA OCA

Distribution See attached list

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