



Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

APR 16 1996

The Honorable Shirley Ann Jackson
Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Madam Chairman:

As you are aware, the President has tasked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to lead an interagency review of the adequacy of the Federal Response Plan (FRP) to respond to nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) threats. This assessment, which is due to the White House by July 1, must include identification of any shortfalls in stockpiles, training and capabilities, along with recommendations on how to remedy them on an urgent basis. At a special meeting of the Catastrophic Disaster Response Group (CDRG) on December 8, 1995, the FRP departments and agencies reached consensus on the approach, milestones, and contents of the report to the President.

As a first phase in carrying out the President's tasking (PDD-39), a "core group" of personnel from FEMA and certain Federal response agencies was formed to develop the assumptions, procedures, and analytical tools needed to assess FRP Emergency Support Function (ESF) capabilities to respond to NBC incidents. The results of the core group's effort were briefed to the ESF leaders on March 13 as a preliminary to the current phase of work, which is an intensive effort involving all of the ESF primary and support agencies.

For the past several weeks, each ESF has been conducting a comprehensive analysis of its ability to carry out the functions detailed in the "core group" examination of possible NBC scenarios. The results of this work will form the basis for the report to the President which will be reviewed and finalized by the CDRG when it meets on June 18. I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this meeting in preparing the report for the President on the Federal Government's response status. To be fully responsive to the explicit tasking given in PDD-39, the report must determine the issues and recommended actions that merit the President's attention. Because of the pressing need for urgent corrective action to reduce vulnerabilities, and the magnitude of the changes and reprioritization that may result, there could be significant program and budgetary implications.

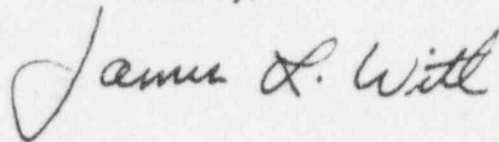
I am therefore requesting your assistance in ensuring that this final phase of the work reflects the full and careful deliberation of all the departments and agencies that are an integral part of the Federal response planning community. Your personal interest in

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ensuring that the NRC's ESF and CDRG representatives are fully cognizant of your views and the level of commitment you are prepared to make in implementing courses of action ensuing from PDD-39 would be extremely helpful. There is no doubt that the results of this review will set the agenda and priorities for our interagency emergency planning and preparedness efforts for the next several years.

We are prepared to provide a briefing on the status of the review and answer any questions you or members of your staff might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James L. Witt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

James L. Witt
Director

cc:
CDRG Member Frank J. Congel
Aby Mohseni