



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

8/27

August 11, 1998

COMNJD-98-006

RELEASED TO THE PDR

1/15/99

date

Initials

MEMORANDUM TO:

Chairman Jackson
Commissioner McGaffigan

FROM:

Commissioner Diaz

SUBJECT:

CLARITY OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

At the Senate Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property and Nuclear Safety oversight hearing on July 30, 1998, the importance of clarity and balance of NRC communications with the public once again became quite apparent. NRC's vision in the Strategic Plan is stated in terms of its credibility. It is obvious that NRC's credibility is under scrutiny and if it is used to measure the effectiveness of our regulations then it is dependent not only on how well the "job" is done, but on how well it is communicated to the public and to those whose responsibility it is to provide the agency's oversight.

The Commission is considering a number of recommendations in SECY-98-089, "PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVE (DSI-14)", such as developing plain English summaries at the beginning of all high profile reports and meetings with the public, yet I believe that more needs to be done. To bring this communication need to parallel agency priorities, I recommend that a one year program be established as soon as possible that addresses cultural issues ingrained throughout the NRC, i.e., the "cavalry-to-the-rescue" mindset, and the need for immediate, sustained improvements in how public communications are staffed and implemented.

I propose that approximately \$100,000 be budgeted to the Office of Public Affairs in FY '99 for implementing such initiatives, including classes in public communications for senior staff and supervisors and the development of a process whereby accountability for coordinating public communications from those representing the NRC is established. The resources should be provided by reducing travel by less than 1% of all offices across the board.

SECY, please track.

cc: SECY
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