

February 3, 1998

Bruce B. Hicks, Director
Air Resources Laboratory
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
SSMC-3, Room 3152
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Hicks:

For many years NRC has relied on NOAA's expertise to augment our incident response capability. Specifically, since the contract with NOAA commenced in 1990, the Air Resources Laboratory (ARL) has provided high quality meteorological assistance and scientific oversight to the NRC at exercises, events, weather emergencies, and during technical meetings. In recent years, NOAA has helped NRC in the development of our RASCAL dose projection code and has developed a web page for NRC that allows the user to run the HYSPLIT transport and dispersion model and obtain meteorological forecast information for any commercial nuclear power plant site. Furthermore, the ARL representatives that have supported NRC in recent years — Glenn Rolph, Jeff McQueen, and Barbara Stunder — have been a pleasure to work with and have exhibited a high degree of competence and professionalism.

As in most Federal agencies, the NRC budget has been substantially reduced relative to previous years. Consequently, we have been forced to take a hard look at all of our contractual obligations. Following a systematic evaluation of all of our contracts, we identified a list of contracts that we could eliminate without substantially affecting our ability to carry out our incident response mission. The contract with NOAA was identified as a contract that we could discontinue. This decision was based on two central facts: (1) under the terms of the Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan (FRERP), NOAA would still support the NRC in an emergency; and (2) most of the developmental support provided by NOAA has been completed.

We regret that we have to make this decision, but we have found no other alternative. I hope that our staffs can continue to work together, even if at a reduced level, to ensure that the expert scientists at NOAA ARL will be prepared to support the NRC in an emergency.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

Frank J. Congel, Director
Incident Response Division
Office for Analysis and
Evaluation of Operational Data

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