

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

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INFORMATION REPORT

date

initials

May 5, 1999

SECY 99-127

For: The Commissioners

From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO

Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING APRIL 30, 1999

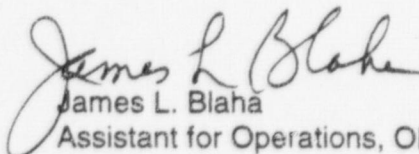
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*No input this week.


James L. Blaha
Assistant for Operations, OEDO

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Contact:
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Gap/Separation of Fuel Assembly Upper Nozzle

At V.C. Summer on April 13, 1999, while removing fuel assemblies from the reactor core, the licensee noted that a fuel assembly was not properly latched. A video camera inspection revealed an approximately one-eighth inch gap between the hold down spring block assembly and the top nozzle. The problem assembly was from a batch of fuel that had completed two operating cycles. The gap problem was found to be wide-spread on the twice burned fuel but not present on the once burned or the three times burned assemblies. Summer is replacing the top nozzles on the assemblies involved.

Seabrook reviewed the video inspection of their twice burned fuel and discovered that all 28 assemblies that were scheduled for reload exhibited the gap problem. Due to the restart delay that would be caused by replacing the two nozzles at Seabrook (necessitated by waiting for the equipment to arrive), the core was redesigned in order to eliminate the use of the 28 assemblies.

Westinghouse has notified all their fuel customers and the Westinghouse Owners' Group (WOG). The cause is thought to be failure of the top nozzle screw. Possible root causes are overtightening of the screws, a manufacturing defect due to the heat lot of the screws and a combination of the two previously listed causes. Fuel manufactured between May 1995 and May 1997 is suspect because overtightening may have occurred during that period. Westinghouse is completing a safety evaluation to assure safe operation for the operating plants. The WOG is reviewing the safety evaluation. A similar problem was seen at ASCO in Spain about a year ago. The confirmed root cause was overtightening.

Thus far the confirmed plants are Summer, Seabrook, and Sequoyah. Fuel from Wolf Creek, Byron 1, and Salem 2 has not shown the problem. Fuel at Braidwood 2 and Surry 2 will be examined this week. The WOG will address this issue at the Semi-Annual NRR/WOG meeting on April 29, 1999.

River Bend Fuel Leak Follow-up

On April 21, 1999, the Reactor Systems Branch (SRXB) participated in a telephone conference with the River Bend licensee staff. The plant recently shut down for refueling after completing a cycle during which multiple fuel leaks were detected. During the conference, the licensee confirmed that seven fuel bundles were found to contain leaking rods. The licensee disclosed fuel inspection findings to date (the inspections were in progress) and plans for further inspection and root-cause analysis of the leaks. Preliminary indications were that the fuel failures were caused by a corrosion mechanism associated with excessive crud buildup on the fuel.

In an April 27, 1999, Entergy News Release, the licensee reported that the refueling outage will be extended for at least 6 weeks to replace affected fuel. During a telephone conference on April 28, 1999, attended by SRXB staff, the licensee discussed their plans for further fuel

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inspection and root-cause analysis. As a precautionary measure the licensee plans to replace all fuel assemblies of the type which exhibited fuel leaks or the tendency to accumulate excessive crud deposits. To accomplish this, 112 new fuel assemblies are being manufactured to supplement new fuel already on site. At this point, the licensee intends to restart that plant at the end of June 1999. Due to the redesigned core configuration, the licensee plans to operate through an interim cycle of 6 to 9 months followed by another refueling outage.

SRXB will continue to track the situation, especially root cause analysis findings and licensee restart plans.

Meeting w/ Reliability Assessment Subcommittee (RAS) of the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) on Grid Reliability

On April 14, 1999, the Electrical & Instrumentation & Controls Branch met with the Reliability Assessment Subcommittee (RAS) of the North American Reliability Council (NERC) in Washington D.C. to discuss the status of the RAS Summer Assessment as it relates to the grid reliability issue and what impact summer conditions may have on the offsite power reliability to nuclear power plants.

The RAS committee members described the steps taken to study projected electric grid conditions this year using probabilistic and deterministic engineering techniques. The annual NERC Summer Assessment Report is expected to be issued and available on the Internet at www.nerc.com on May 14, 1999. Although RAS expects the Summer of 1999 to be a challenging season, each region projects that demand requirements will be met with the use of contingency measures. None of the meeting attendees expect that the offsite power to nuclear power plants will be impacted by the currently anticipated operational difficulties.

Braidwood Unit 2 Containment Coating Degradation

During the current refueling outage that started on April 23, 1999, the NRC resident inspector noticed that there was a significant amount of paint peeling off the containment wall outside of the missile shield. This coating system was "qualified" to the requirements of Regulatory Guide 1.54. The coating system consists of an inorganic zinc primer and an epoxy phenolic topcoat. The topcoat is coming off of the primer with part of the primer adhering to the topcoat. The licensee's preliminary root cause for the degradation is that the primer was applied too thickly and the primer is failing cohesively. Many of the paint chips were several inches square. Discussions with the licensee indicate that similar peeling was noted during the last several refueling outages. The peeling was initially observed in an area classified as outside of the zone-of-influence for material blockage of the sump. Therefore, this peeling will not significantly contribute to sump screen blockage. However, there is a concern that the larger paint chips may block flow paths to the sump screens. The NRC staff is continuing to investigate this issue.

Three Mile Island Unit 1 (TMI-1)

On April 20, 1999, the staff issued an Exemption to GPU Nuclear, Inc., from the requirements of 10 CFR 50, Appendix R, Section III.G.2 for 6 of 10 requested fire areas/zones at TMI-1. The staff denied the request for 4 requested fire zones. The licensee had requested an exemption from the requirement to enclose cable and equipment and associated non-safety-related

circuits necessary to achieve and maintain safe shutdown in a fire barrier having a 1-hour fire endurance rating. The Exemption, for 2 of the 6 areas approved, is contingent upon modifications by the licensee including installation of an automatic sprinkler system in one fire zone and installation of combustible gas detectors in one fire area.

The staff will issue a "consent" letter shortly to the licensee to confirm the schedule for completion of Thermo-lag resolution at TMI-1 (currently scheduled for December 31, 1999), and upon receipt of the licensee's confirmation of that schedule will follow with issuance of a confirmatory Order. This will complete the staff's technical review of Thermo-lag resolution at TMI-1.

Oconee Nuclear Station Units 1, 2, and 3

On April 15, 1999, Duke Energy Corporation Board of Directors approved the purchase of replacement steam generators for the three Oconee units. The only approval remaining is that of the North Carolina and South Carolina State Public Utilities Boards. The six steam generators will be manufactured in Canada by the Morrison Knudsen Corporation. They will be installed in Unit 1 during the fall 2003 outage, in Unit 2 during the spring 2004 outage, and in Unit 3 during the fall 2004 outage. Many of the same Duke personnel that worked on replacement of the McGuire Nuclear Station Units 1 and 2 and the Catawba Nuclear Station Unit 1 steam generators have been assigned to the Oconee project.

Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant

On December 23, 1998, the licensee submitted an amendment application to increase its spent fuel storage capacity by placing pools 'C' and 'D' in service. The NRC staff published its proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination in the Federal Register on January 13, 1999.

On February 12, 1999, the Board of Commissioners of Orange County, North Carolina (the intervenor) filed a Request for a Hearing and Petition to Intervene. On February 24, 1999, an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) was established. The administrative judges on the Board are G. Paul Boilwerk, III, Chairman; Frederick J. Shon; and Dr. Peter S. Lam.

The intervenor filed eight contentions on April 5, 1999. The NRC staff's and the licensee's response to the contentions are due to the ASLB on May 5, 1999.

On April 21, 1999, the ASLB granted a motion by the intervenor to relocate the initial prehearing conference from Rockville, Maryland to the vicinity of the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant. The initial prehearing conference will be held on May 13, 1999, in the District Court of Orange County Courtroom in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. During the initial prehearing conference, the ASLB will hear arguments from the participants on the intervenor's standing and on the admissibility of its contentions.

Grand Gulf

On April 26, 1999, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued Amendment No. 137 to GGNS Operating License No. NPF-29. The amendment extends the expiration date of the operating

license from June 16, 2022 to November 1, 2024. The extended date accounts for the time interval between the GGNS low power license (issued June 16, 1982), and the separate full power license (issued November 1, 1984). This amendment is in response to the Entergy Operations, Inc. application dated July 21, 1995, and completes the oldest licensing action currently on the GGNS Project Manager Report.

Trojan

On Friday, April 23, 1999, the staff issued two license amendments which allow the Trojan plant to transfer spent fuel to the onsite Part 72 licensed ISFSI. The fuel transfer is expected to begin the week of May 17 and last approximately one year. Fuel assemblies will be placed in stainless steel baskets which are inside transfer casks and transferred by the fuel building crane to the bottom of the fuel building hoist way where the stainless steel baskets will be transferred to storage casks. The storage casks will be transferred to the ISFSI storage pad using an air lift system.

On Tuesday April 27, the Trojan reactor vessel (RV) was down ended inside the containment building. The RV had previously been filled with concrete and had several inches of shielding added to the outer cylindrical surface. The RV now weighs approximately 840 tons. After welding closed the incore instrument penetrations the RV will be moved outside and prepared for shipment to the waste disposal facility at the Hanford reservation. After the addition of impact limiters and structural members the RV will weigh approximately 1000 tons as it is shipped. When the fuel has been transferred to the ISFSI and the RV shipped to the disposal facility, the Trojan plant staff will be positioned to complete decontamination and dismantlement activities and ultimately terminate the part 50 license.

Oversight Transition Task Force Activities

A public workshop to provide information on the pilot plant performance indicators was held on April 12-15, 1999, in the vicinity of Region III. The workshop provided information to selected NRC inspectors, licensees, and interested public groups or members. The workshop was well attended and provided for a good discussion of performance indicator process.

A workshop for the NRC staff to provide information on the risk-informed reactor inspection program and oversight process improvements was held in the vicinity of Region II during the week of April 26. The target audience was regional inspectors and managers, resident inspectors and SRAs. A regulatory oversight process public workshop will also be held during the week of May 17, 1999, in the vicinity of Region 1. This workshop is open to public.

Request for public comment on recommended improvements to the oversight processes for nuclear reactors (follow-up to SECY 99-007A) has been published in the Federal Register.

The NRR staff (Bill Dean, Alan Madison, Gareth Parry and Don Hickman) held a meeting with Region IV management and Change Coalition members regarding the performance assessment process and inspection program status.

NRC Information Notice 99-12: Year 2000 Computer Systems Readiness Audits

The NRC is issuing this information notice (IN) to inform addressees of observations made by NRC staff during audits conducted on the Year 2000 (Y2K) readiness programs of twelve plants.

NRC Information Notice 99-13: Insights from NRC Inspections of Low- and Medium-voltage Circuit Breaker Maintenance Programs Dated April 29, 1999

The NRC is issuing this information notice to summarize observations made and insights gained during inspections of licensee circuit breaker maintenance programs.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Meeting with Pacific Gas and Electric

On April 22, 1999, staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office met with representatives of Pacific Gas and Electric (PGE) to discuss the utility's plans for dry cask storage at its Diablo Canyon and Humboldt Bay facilities in California. Diablo Canyon is an operating plant, while Humboldt Bay is maintained under a SAFSTOR license. In addition to staff from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, representatives of Holtec International, BNFL Fuel Solutions, and Nuclear.Com also attended the meeting. This was one in a series of meetings requested by PGE to keep the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff informed of the progress being made in the development of license applications for independent spent fuel storage installations at each facility. The main topic discussed at this meeting was the development of quality assurance programs and plans for the proposed storage facilities. The representatives of PGE noted that all pre-application activities are being done under the existing NRC-approved Diablo Canyon quality assurance plan, which meets the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50 Appendix B (the requirements for quality assurance for operating nuclear power plants).

Meeting with Nuclear Energy Institute on Decommissioning Issues

On April 26, 1999, representatives of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), its decommissioning working group, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) met at NRC Headquarters. Representatives of utilities and the Electric Power Research Institute also attended the meeting, and NRC was represented by the Offices of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES), Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, and Nuclear Reactor Regulation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a number of topics of interest to NEI which included probabilistic risk assessments (PRA) and decommissioning, and the licensing process for dry cask storage designs, fuel burnup credit, and materials release. Agreements were made to keep NEI informed of progress on the development of a PRA model for spent fuel storage, to hold a teleconference with NEI to discuss the RES Work Plan supporting burnup credit, to address burnup credit issues and concerns at an upcoming public workshop in May, and for NEI to participate in upcoming public workshops on the clearance rulemaking. No regulatory decisions were requested or made during the meeting.

Meeting with Department of Energy's Regulatory Unit on Design Issues

On April 28, 1999, a meeting was conducted by the Department of Energy's Regulatory Unit in Richland, Washington, with BNFL Inc., DOE's contractor for the Tank Waste Remediation Privatization waste vitrification project. Staff from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards (FCSS) traveled to Richland, Washington, to participate in the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the contractor an opportunity to present their positions on certain issues related to recent major design changes in the facility and to discuss how dose calculations are made for postulated accidents. FCSS staff provided an evaluation of information provided by the contractor in support of the meeting and elaborated on the identified technical issues during the meeting. The meeting was open to the public.

Incident Response Operations
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATIONS:

1. PNO-II-99-012, Triad Engineering, Inc., STOLEN MOISTURE DENSITY GAUGE
2. PNO-III-99-025, Terre Haute Regional Hospital, THERAPEUTIC MISADMINISTRATION
3. PNO-III-99-0926, Sterigenics International, SOURCE RACK FOR POOL IRRADIATOR
STUCK ON GUIDE CABLE
4. PNO-IV-99-023, Raytheon Engineers & Constructors, INDUSTRIAL RADIOGRAPHY
SOURCE DISCONNECT

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Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Initial Licensed Operator Examination Requirements (Part 55)

A final rule that amends the regulations concerning licensed operator examinations was published in the Federal Register on April 23, 1999 (64 FR 19868). The final rule allows nuclear power facility licensees to prepare, proctor, and grade written examinations and prepare the operating tests that the NRC currently uses to evaluate the competence of individuals applying for operator licenses at these plants. The final rule becomes effective October 20, 1999.

Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions (10 CFR Chapter I)

The NRC semiannual regulatory agenda, required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act and Executive Order 12866 "Regulatory Planning and Review," was published in the Federal Register on April 26, 1999 (64 FR 22380). The agenda is a compilation of all rules on which the NRC has recently completed action, has proposed, or is considering action.

Industry Codes and Standards (Part 50)

A supplement to the proposed rule December 3, 1997 (62 FR 63892), that would amend NRC's regulations that incorporate by reference a number of industry codes and standards applicable to nuclear power plant licensees was published in the Federal Register on April 27, 1999 (64 FR 22580). In this supplementary proposed rule, the NRC requests comments on the proposed elimination of the 120-day update requirement for inservice inspection and inservice testing programs. The comment period on this proposed rule closes June 28, 1999.

Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 5-Day Period of
April 23, 1999 through April 29, 1999:

Named individual, vacancy announcement # 9944002. (FOIA/PA 99-199)

EnviroCare of Utah, License # SMC-1559, violations, 1/1/97 to present. (FOIA/PA 99-200)

Non-FOIA. (FOIA/PA 99-201)

Named individual, CP&L employment records and access determinations for named sites.
(FOIA/PA 99-202)

International Nutronics, Inc., License 29-13848-01 file (Docket # 030-07026).
(FOIA/PA 99-203)

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Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Arrivals		
OLIVIER, Julie	CHEMICAL ENGINEER	NMSS
WILLOUGHBY, Leonard	REACTOR ENGINEER	RIV
Retirements		
MORRIS, Billy	SPECIAL ASST TO DIRECTOR	RES

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Office of Public Affairs
Items of interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Media Interest

Chairman Jackson was interviewed by the Nuclear Energy Institute for a planned CD-ROM.

There was press interest in the decision by the state of Connecticut to issue a temporary restraining order aimed at preventing the restart of Millstone.

The New York Times is preparing an article on Indian Point.

Philadelphia Magazine is publishing a story on the sale of Three Mile Island.

There have been several media inquiries on the use of depleted uranium in Kosovo.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
99-86	Note to Editors: ACRS Reports
99-87	Nuclear Power Plants on Track for Achieving Y2K Compliance by July 1
99-88	NRC Authorizes Northeast Utilities to Begin Restart of Millstone Unit 2
99-89	Note to Editors: ACRS subcommittees meet
98-90	NRC Extends Public Comment Period for Regulations Licensing Proposed Radioactive Waste Repository in Nevada
98-91	Note to Editors: ACRS reports
Regions:	
II-99-30	NRC Staff to Hold Performance Evaluation Meeting at Robinson
III-99-28	NRC Staff to Meet With Wisconsin Public Service Officials to Discuss Performance at Kewaunee Nuclear Plant
III-99-26	NRC Staff Finds Improvements at Clinton Nuclear Power Plant Sufficient for Resumption of Operation

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Assignees from Switzerland and Spain

On May 3, 1999, Ms. Claudia Humbel, an employee of the Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (HSK) and Dr. Miguel Sanchez Perea, an employee of the Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear (CSN), will begin six-month assignments at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ms. Humbel will be assigned to the Operator Licensing, Human Performance and Plant Support Branch (IOHB), Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR). Her supervisor will be Clare Goodman.

Dr. Perea will be assigned to the Safety Margins and Systems Analysis Branch (SMSAB), Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES). His supervisor will be Joseph Kelly.

The First Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety

On March 25, 1999, the U.S. Senate voted its advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), and the instrument of ratification was deposited with the IAEA on April 12, 1999. The first CNS National Report Review Meeting convened in Vienna, Austria, on April 12-23, 1999. As a result of a successful U.S. request to the Contracting Parties to the CNS on April 11, a U.S. delegation headed by the Senior Coordinator for Nuclear Safety from the Department of State, and including representatives of the NRC's Offices of International Programs and Nuclear Reactor Regulation, attended the final plenary sessions (April 21-23).

The U.S. delegation was present during the summary discussion of the six country group review meetings held the week before. The delegation provided a short statement announcing the availability of a supplement to the U.S. National Report, and invited questions on the report. The delegation also participated in the discussion of procedural matters affecting future meetings.

It was agreed that the next Review Meeting will begin on April 15, 2002. About six months before the review meeting, in September 2001, an Organizational Meeting will be convened, at which updated National Reports will be submitted.

Subgroup on Nuclear Export Coordination

The Subgroup on Nuclear Export Coordination (SNEC), an interagency committee chaired by the Department of State which primarily reviews applications involving items controlled for nuclear non-proliferation reasons, met on Friday, April 30, 1999. Discussions focused on eight Department of Commerce dual-use cases involving exports to India, China and Israel, and an NRC case involving an application for the export of zircaloy tubing to China for testing the fabrication process in a new fuel cladding facility.

U.S./Australia/Canada Trilateral Nuclear Consultations

On April 28, 1999, Ms. Janice Dunn Lee, OIP Acting Director, was invited to participate in nuclear discussions with Canada and Australia held at the Department of State. The agenda included nuclear non-proliferation topics related to safeguards, IAEA issues, fissile material cutoff treaty, 2000 NPT Review Conference, and relations with Iran, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, Russia, and China. Ms. Lee made a short presentation on the issue of Y2K with a focus on nuclear safety.

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Office of the Secretary
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Documents Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. COMSECY-99-012	3/24/99	Office of International Programs Annual Report
SRM on 99-012	4/26/99	(same)
Chairman Jackson vote on 99-012	4/12/99	(same)
Comm. Dicus vote on 99-012	3/31/99	(same)
Comm. Diaz vote on 99-012	4/6/99	(same)
Comm. McGaffigan vote on 99-012	4/9/99	(same)
Comm. Merrifield vote on 99-012	4/9/99	(same)
2. SRM on SECY-99-109	4/28/99	Recovery of Millstone Nuclear Power Station, Unit 2
Commission Voting Record on 99-109	4/28/99	(same)
Negative Consent Documents		
1. SECY-99-075	3/11/99	Proposed Minor Amendments to 10 CFR Part 2
SRM on 99-075	4/23/99	(same)
Information Papers		
1. SECY-99-105	4/8/99	Weekly Information Report - Week Ending April 2, 1999
2. SECY-99-112	4/14/99	Weekly Information Report - Week Ending April 9, 1999

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Memoranda		
1. M990426	4/26/99	Staff Requirements - Affirmation Session, 4/26/99: a: Secy-99-097-Shieldalloy Metallurgical Corp. (Cambridge, Ohio Facility), Docket No. 40-8948-MLA, Memo & Order (Denying Petition to Intervene), LBP-99-12 (2/23/99); b: Secy-99-103 - International Uranium (USA) Corporation Petition for Review of LBP-99-5; c: SECY-99-110-Aharon Ben-Haim, Ph.D., Docket No. 1A-97-068, LBP-99-4 Initial Decision (Affirming Enforcement Order with Modifications) (2/8/99); d: Secy-99-111 -Proposed License to Export High Enriched Uranium (HEU) for Production of Medical Isotopes at the Canadian Maple Reactors (XSNM03060); e: Secy-99-116-North Atlantic Energy Service Corp. (Seabrook Station, Unit 1), Docket No. 50-443, Draft Commission Memo & Order Terminating the Proceeding; f: Secy-99-120 - Boston Edison Company & Entergy Nuclear Generation Company (Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station), Docket No. 50-293, Draft Commission Memo & Order Terminating the Proceeding
2. M990414B	4/28/99	Staff Requirements - Briefing on Remaining Issues Related to Proposed Restart of Millstone Unit 2 (SECY-99-109), Wednesday, April 14, 1999
3. M990414B <u>REVISED</u>	4/28/99	Staff Requirements - Briefing on Remaining Issues Related to Proposed Restart of Millstone Unit 2 (SECY-99-109), Wednesday, April 14, 1999
4. M990416	4/29/99	Staff Requirements - Briefing on Rulemaking for Generally Licensed Devices, Friday, April 16, 1999

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to Robert Loux, Executive Director, Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, dated April 23, 1999, concerns the proposed rule to amend environmental review requirements for the renewal of nuclear power plant operating licenses (incoming dated April 5, 1999 also released).

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2. Letter to Dennis Bechtel, Planning Manager, Nevada Department of Comprehensive Planning, Nuclear Waste Division, concerns the proposed rule to amend environmental review requirements for the renewal of nuclear power plant operating licenses (incoming dated April 6, 1999 also released).

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Applications for Licenses to Export Nuclear Material (Aldrich Chemical Co.).
2. ACRS Subcommittee Meeting on Thermal-Hydraulic Phenomena; Notice of Meeting on May 26, 1999.
3. ACRS Subcommittee Meeting on Severe Accident Management; Notice of Meeting on May 27, 1999.
4. 10 CFR Part 50; Codes and Standards: IEEE National Consensus Standard; Final Rule: Correction.
5. 10 CFR Parts 2, 19, 20, 21, 30, 40, 51, 60, 61, and 63; Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Wastes in a Proposed Geologic Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada; Proposed Rule: Extension of Comment Period.

Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Management Meeting with Underwood Engineering Testing Co.

On April 22, 1999, Region I conducted a Management Meeting with Underwood Engineering Testing Co., Inc. (UETC). This meeting was held to discuss nonescalated repetitive violations identified during an NRC inspection of UETC conducted on February 19, 1999 and to provide UETC with a better understanding of NRC expectations concerning effective corrective actions. Two management representatives of UETC attended the meeting. At the meeting UETC proposed several changes to their licensed program, including changing the RSO to an individual who can devote more time to the program and whose duties are more closely associated with the licensed program; and the use of a computer program to provide automatic reminders of key dates for NRC required tests and checks.

Maine Yankee Community Advisory Panel Meeting April 29, 1999

A RI Manager provided a quarterly update of NRC activities at a meeting of the Maine Yankee Community Advisory Panel (CAP) on April 29, 1999. The CAP meeting was held at the Maine Yankee site and was attended by approximately 50 people. The CAP was established to review the decommissioning activities at Maine Yankee and to provide local citizens, representatives of local interest groups, and technical experts an opportunity to provide input to the decommissioning of Maine Yankee. The panel is chaired by State Senator Marge Kil Kelly.

Two issues of interest to the CAP are the final radiological release criteria for the site, and a safeguards review of the recent movement of vehicle barriers. Maine Yankee committed to providing an in-depth briefing of the differences in the site release guidance issued by the EPA and the requirements of the NRC at the next CAP meeting scheduled for June 10, 1999. The CAP has asked for senior-level officials from the EPA and NRC to then attend a summer meeting (to be scheduled) to serve on a panel to further discuss these differences. With respect to the movement of vehicle barriers, NRC is arranging for a contractor to review the licensee's safety evaluation justifying the change under 10 CFR 50.54(p). A commitment was made to provide the CAP the status of this review at the June 10 meeting.

Public comments concerned the upcoming transportation inspections, changes in NRC's Enforcement Policy, and the NRC criteria for radiological release of the site under 10 CFR 20.1402. A copy of the July 21, 1997 Federal Register notice identifying the final rule changes in the NRC release criteria and the bases for these changes was provided to the CAP.

Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Tennessee Valley Authority - Watts Bar

On April 27, Commissioner Dicus and the Director of the Division of Reactor Safety took a site familiarization tour of Watts Bar and met with licensee management. While onsite, they observed major portions of a planned Operational Safeguards Response Evaluation (OSRE).

Region II Management Retreat

The Regional Administrator and other Region II managers participated in a management retreat on April 28 and 29 in Hiawassee, Georgia. Areas discussed included Region II's performance updates for the 2nd Quarter FY 99, and future areas of focus.

Risk-Informed Baseline Inspection Program Workshop

Region II assisted NRR in hosting a workshop for over 70 NRC staff from Headquarters and the other regions involved in the Risk-Informed Baseline Inspection Program for the Reactor Oversight Process. The workshop addressed a number of topics, including the detailed inspection procedures for each of the inspectable areas, a review of the methodology for determining the significance of inspection findings, inspection report and Plant Issues Matrix documentation, plant performance assessments, and inspection planning.

Duke Energy Corporation - Oconee

The Deputy Director, Division of Reactor Safety, participated in an exit meeting with the licensee on April 30, 1999, for the first inspection of the license renewal program for the Oconee plant. The inspection focused on Duke Energy Corporation's methodology for scoping and screening the structures and components included in its program for managing aging at Oconee. Region II representatives will participate in a meeting with Duke officials in Headquarters on May 11, 1999, to further discuss the screening and scoping methodology used at Oconee.

Region III
Items of Interest
Week Ending April 30, 1999

Management Meeting with Consumers Energy Company - Palisades

On April 28, 1999, a management meeting was conducted in Covert, Michigan, between management representatives from Consumers Energy Company and members of the NRC staff. The meeting discussion focused on the recent Plant Performance Review of the Palisades Nuclear Generating Plant.

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Office of Congressional Affairs
Items of Interest
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CONGRESSIONAL HEARING SCHEDULE, NO. 17					
OCA Contact	DATE & PLACE	TIME	WITNESS	SUBJECT	COMMITTEE
Keeling	05/05/99 216 HSOB	9:30	TBA	Alleged Chinese Espionags	Senators Murkowski/Bingaman Energy and Natural Resources
Keeling	05/05/99 2322 RHOB	10:00	TBA	Security at DOE Laboratories	Reps. Bliley/Dingell Commerce
Gerke	05/06/99 2123 RHOB	10:00	TBA	Electricity Competition: Market Power, Mergers, and PUHCA	Reps. Barton/Hall Energy and Power Commerce
Gerke	05/12/99 2154 RHOB	10:00	TBA	Federal Employees Health Benefits Program	Reps. Scarborough/Cummings Civil Service Government Reform
Gerke	TBA 562 DSOB	TBA	DOD, DOE	Y2K and Nuclear Issues	Senators Bennett/Dodd Special Year 2000 Tech Problem
Combs	TBA 1324 LHOB	TBA	Markup	H.R. 45, Amending Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982	Rep. Young/Miller Resources

April 30, 1999

ENCLOSURE R