



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

October 20, 1981

Honorable Nunzio J. Palladino
Chairman
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

SUBJECT: ACRS REVIEW AND REPORTS ON SAFETY RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Dear Dr. Palladino:

Since 1977, the ACRS has been required by the Congress to report to it annually on the NRC Safety Research Program. This report is prepared each year, after OMB has transmitted the budget request to the Congress in November, and is submitted in February before the appropriate Congressional committees complete their recommendations on the authorization bill.

Since 1979, we have provided a report to the Commission on the research program and its budget, usually just before the EDO budget goes to the Commission for final action in July. This report has been similar in scope to the Report to Congress, although the original request from the Commission was for comments on the budget rather than a complete review of the safety research program.

In 1981, we prepared a report to the Commission on the draft Long Range Research Plan (LRRP). This report was in the form of a letter rather than the format of the other two reports noted above. This report, too, was requested by the Commission, and existing procedures call for similar reviews and reports on the yearly updates of the LRRP.

We believe that our reviews of the safety research program in general, and of individual areas and projects, have been useful to both us and the RES Staff. We believe that the Staff has been responsive in large part to our comments and recommendations.

However, we do not believe that the benefits from our reviews and reports justify the expenditure of resources by the ACRS, its Staff and consultants, and by the RES Staff, that has been required to make three separate reviews each year and prepare three separate reports. We understand that Mr. Minogue agrees with this evaluation.

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We propose to ameliorate this situation, without reducing the extent or effectiveness of our review of the program and our interaction with the RES Staff, by the following procedures:

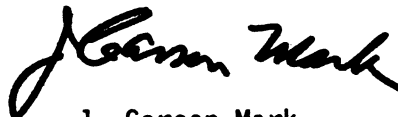
Report to Congress. We will continue to prepare this report, as before. It will be relatively long and relatively comprehensive, and will provide comments on the nature, scope and effectiveness of the program as well as on needs and proposed funding levels. This report will continue to be available in February, and thus can be used by the RES Staff as a basis for its update of the LRRP and its preparation of the next budget cycle.

Report to the Commission. If requested, we will, of course, provide comments or advice to the Commission on the RES budget request or on specific portions of the safety research program or on funding levels in detail or in general. However, we prefer not to provide evaluations and comments of the kind and scope already included in the Report to Congress. Such a report to the Commission would be brief and in letter form.

Long Range Research Plan. The first LRRP developed was little more than a five-year projection of current programs and current needs, and provided little to review in addition to the reviews we had already made of ongoing programs and those planned for the next one or two years. We believe, therefore, that reviewing the LRRP would not be an effective use of our time unless a more meaningful plan is developed.

We would be pleased to have your comments on these proposed changes in procedures, and we will be willing to discuss them with you and the Commissioners at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Carson Mark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "J." and last name "Mark" clearly distinguishable.

J. Carson Mark
Chairman