

May 20, 1999

SECY 99-137

For: The Commissioners
From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING MAY 14, 1999

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*No input this week.

James L. Blaha
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Catawba Nuclear Station Unit 1

Catawba Unit 1 is currently in a refueling outage and the licensee is conducting regular maintenance on ice condenser containment (ICC) ice baskets. In Bay 16 of the ICC, the licensee found five baskets with more than two screws missing from a basket section joint. Also, two other bays had one basket with more than two screws missing from a section joint. According to the licensee, the Westinghouse acceptance criterion for Catawba Unit 1 is no more than two screws (out of 12) missing per section joint.

The inspections were done by a camera being lowered down the inside of the baskets during regularly planned ICC servicing (emptying, inspection, and refilling of baskets). The licensee plans to inspect the rest of the baskets in Bay 16 by lowering a camera down the flow channels to inspect from outside the basket.

Completion of Items on Chairman's Tracking Memo

During the weeks of April 26 and May 3, the staff issued three licensing actions that closed out items being monitored on the Chairman's Tracking Memo (CTM). The actions included two license amendments for Maine Yankee, one of which revised the liquid and gaseous release rate limits and another that deleted several license conditions which are no longer applicable to the shutdown and defueled condition of the plant. The other action was a license amendment for Haddam Neck, which relocated a seismic monitoring technical specification to a licensee-controlled document.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Meeting with Private Fuel Storage, Limited Liability Corporation

On May 7, 1999, staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office and the Office of the General Counsel met with representatives of Private Fuel Storage (PFS), Limited Liability Corporation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss several questions regarding hydrology at the proposed site of the PFS facility. This facility, if licensed, would be an away-from-reactor independent spent fuel storage installation for the member utilities of the consortium comprising PFS. The proposed location of the PFS facility is in the northwestern part of the reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians. The reservation is bordered on all sides by Tooele County, Utah. Also attending the meeting were representatives of BNFL Fuel Solutions, Westinghouse, Harmon, Curran, Shaw Pittman, the Ixex Group, and a member of the public. The staff and the representatives of PFS discussed recently submitted data regarding analyses of potential flooding at the proposed site of the PFS facility.

Meeting with Colorado River Board of California

On May 5, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management (DWM) made a presentation to the Colorado River Board of California. The Board requested that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) attend a meeting to discuss the impacts to the Colorado River from the reclamation of uranium mill tailings at the Atlas site in Moab, Utah. Following the DWM presentation, the Board indicated it would take into consideration a recommendation from one member that a letter be sent to the NRC advocating removal of the tailings to a site away from the Colorado River. The Board is comprised of major water authorities in the State of California, several state agencies, and two at-large citizens.

Meeting with the Department of Energy on Disposal Criticality for the Proposed Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada

On May 5, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management met with the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management staff and their contractors to discuss the Disposal Criticality Analysis Methodology Topical Report, which was submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for review in January 1999. The topical report proposes a methodology for analyzing the potential of criticalities to occur and the possible consequences. The proposed methodology addresses potential critical configurations both inside and outside the waste packages. The topical report primarily covers commercial spent fuel with a series of planned addenda (which will be submitted from September 1999 to May 2002) covering application of the methodology to the Navy and the DOE spent fuel, and immobilized plutonium in ceramic waste forms.

In this technical exchange, the schedule for the staff review of the topical report was discussed briefly. In addition, the approach for establishing design criteria with respect to waste package criticality was discussed extensively. The NRC staff will review this and other aspects of the topical report over the coming months.

Meeting on Church Rock Site Groundwater Problems and Solutions

On May 11, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management attended a meeting at the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Region 6 Office in Dallas, Texas, to discuss groundwater problems and solutions at the United Nuclear Corporation's (UNC) Church Rock uranium mill and tailings site. The Church Rock site, near Gallup, New Mexico, is an EPA Superfund site for which the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is the lead federal agency under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NRC and EPA. The meeting was attended by representatives of UNC (now owned by the General Electric Company), and staff from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA).

Surface reclamation at the Church Rock site is essentially complete. UNC has requested changes to its groundwater corrective action program (CAP), which cannot be made (per the MOU) without concurrence from EPA, which in turn requires concurrence from NMED and NNEPA. Progress on agreeing to changes in the CAP has been delayed due to changes in responsible staff at UNC and the four regulatory agencies, and the various agencies' approval processes. The meeting was productive and resulted in agreement on the actions required to make the CAP more in line with actual site conditions. The next major actions will be agreement by NNEPA on revisions to groundwater background concentrations (expected in June or July 1999), which will support EPA's issue of Explanation of Significant Differences to its Record of Decision, and subsequent submittal of a request for alternate concentration limits by UNC.

Incident Response Operations
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATIONS:

1. PNO-I-99-022, Northeast Utilities, MILLSTONE UNIT 2 CRITICALITY
2. PNO-I-99-023, Niagara Mohawk Power Corp., REACTOR CORE SHROUD REPAIR - MEDIA INTEREST
3. PNO-II-99-016, Georgia Power, SHUTDOWN IN EXCESS OF 72 HOURS
4. PNO-IV-99-024, Via-Christi St. Francis Reg Med Ctr., MEDICAL MISADMINISTRATION INVOLVING IODINE-131
5. PNO-IV-99-025, Omaha Public Power District (Ft. Calhoun 1), POSSIBLE STOP WORK IN RESPONSE TO CONTRACT DISPUTE

Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Regional Reviews

The Division of Contracts and Property Management conducted a property inventory and procurement review at Region III from May 4 through May 6. The procurement review team examined 659 bankcard transactions and 234 purchase orders for FY98 and FY99. The property review consisted of 100% inventory of all sensitive items and items with a depreciated value of more than \$300 (1083 items). A report of the review team's findings is expected to be issued in June.

Acquisition Training

On May 13, 1999, the Division of Contracts and Property Management conducted the "Acquisition for Supervisors and Managers of Project Managers" training module. This workshop familiarizes participants with the principles of the NRC acquisition process.

Electronic Availability of NRC Public Records and Ending of NRC Local Public Document Room Program (Parts 1, 2, 7, 9, 50, 51, 52, 60, 62, 72, 75, 76, 100, and 110)

A proposed rule that would amend the regulations to reflect the way the NRC will make its records available to the public was published in the Federal Register May 7, 1999 (64 FR 24531). The proposed rule reflects the NRC's decision to implement a new document management system that provides for the electronic storage and retrieval of NRC records. The new system would permit the on-line ordering of publicly available NRC official records through the NRC Web site. The comment period on this action closes June 21, 1999.

Government in the Sunshine Act Regulations (Part 9)

A document announcing the NRC's intent to implement a final rule, published and made effective in 1985, that amended regulations applying the Government in the Sunshine Act was published in the Federal Register. The Commission is providing an opportunity for public comment on its intent because of the time that has passed since the Commission last addressed this issue. The comment period on this action closes June 9, 1999. Unless the Commission takes further action, non-Sunshine Act discussions may be held beginning June 1, 1999.

Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 5-Day Period of
May 7, 1999 through May 13, 1999:

Depleted uranium, Dept. of Defense licensees and any regulatory action taken, 1988 to present. (FOIA/PA 99-214)

Depleted uranium, Dept. of Defense licensees, exemptions from regulations/guidelines or licensing requirements, 1988 to present. (FOIA/PA 99-215)

Holtec International, records associated with docket nos. 07109261, 07201008, and 07201014. (FOIA/PA 99-216)

VA Nuclear Medical Center, Martinez, CA, all correspondence related to VA's use of radioactive materials at the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center. (FOIA/PA 99-217)

Criteria or method for reinterpretation of NRC regulations, 4/20/92 W. C. Parler, OGC to Commission. (FOIA/PA 99-218)

Schreiber Translations Inc., contract for solicitation no. RS-ADM-99-145. (FOIA/PA 99-219)

Document duplication services, contract no. NRC-17-97-137. (FOIA/PA 99-220)

Licensee database including contact name. (FOIA/PA 99-221)

San Onofre OI reports, 4-98-041, 4-98-043, and 4-98-045. (FOIA/PA 99-222)

Operating power plants, restructuring activities in States, updated summary for 9/4/98, 11/16/98, and 4/20/99. (FOIA/PA 99-223)

DOE referral. (FOIA/PA 99-224)

Fire protection at power plants, draft staff paper, all versions with attachments prepared for 5/6/99 ACRS public meeting. (FOIA/PA 99-225)

Frank W. Hake & Associates, Memphis, TN, all licenses, permits, violations, and enforcement actions. (FOIA/PA 99-226)

Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Arrivals		
CARR, Rachel	HEALTH PHYSICIST	RIV
GANNON, Erin	SUMMER ADMIN INTERN	OIG

Office of Small Business & Civil Rights
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Emergency Meeting Called by the Small Business Administration

On May 3, 1999, Von Deloatch, Small Business Program Manager, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, attended an emergency meeting at the Small Business Administration (SBA). The purpose of the meeting, which was called by Dr. Richard Hayes, Associate Deputy Administrator for Government Contracting and Minority Enterprise Development, was to express SBA's concern about the number of Federal agencies not achieving their FY 1998 Procurement Preference Goals. He indicated that the SBA Administrator would be sending letters to agencies that did not meet their goals. NRC met most of its Preference Program Goals for FY 1998.

Von Deloatch attended a meeting on April 29, 1999 for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) held by the White House Initiative Staff. The meeting focused on increased assistance and funding to HBCU's as required under Presidential Executive Order 12928, signed September 16, 1994. The Executive Director of the White House Initiative Staff, plans to contact Department and Agency Heads in the near future to discuss this matter. An annual report of agencies' accomplishments for FY1998 will be made to the President in August 1999.

Office of Public Affairs
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Media Interest

The North County Times (Calif.) Is preparing a story on outage work at San Onofre.

The Houston Business Journal is publishing an article on the new reactor oversight process.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
99-97	Note to Editors: Public Comment on Sunshine Act Rule
99-98	Prehearing Conference Scheduled on Shearon Harris Plant License Amendment (Time and Location Change)
99-99	NRC to Hold Workshop May 17-20 Near Philadelphia on New Oversight Processes for Nuclear Power Plants
99-100	NRC Proposes to Certify Westinghouse Electric Company's AP600 Reactor Design

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

International Nuclear Regulators Association (INRA)

Senior INRA members from the regulatory authorities in Canada, France, Japan, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States met in Washington, D.C., on May 10-11, 1999. The German representative was unable to attend. Members discussed three regulatory concepts: Regulatory Effectiveness, Powers and Sanctions, and Quality Assurance. Mr. Andre-Claude Lacoste (France) reported on the latest Western International Regulators Association and Mr. Lars Hoegberg (Sweden) reported on the First Review Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). Chairman Jackson completed her two-year term as INRA Chairman. INRA members elected Mr. Lawrence Williams (UK) as the next INRA Chairman.

RASSAC Review of Draft WHO Guidelines for Iodine Prophylaxis

OIP, in coordination with NMSS/INMS, has been asked to coordinate informal views to the IAEA, through the Radiation Safety Standards Advisory Committee, regarding a draft World Health Organization document on iodine prophylaxis following nuclear accidents. RASSAC, will meet this week with Don Cool as the U.S. representative and will discuss the merits of IAEA co-sponsorship of the draft document. The document, which is a revision of a 1989 WHO document, uses as its basis inconclusive dose estimates taken following the Chernobyl accident and suggests age-differentiated intervention levels, which would necessitate a revision of the IAEA's Basic Safety Standards.

Office of the Secretary
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Document Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. SECY-99-074	3/11/99	Staff Review of U.S. Department of Energy Viability Assessment for a High-Level Radioactive Waste Repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada
Information Papers		
1. SECY-99-124	4/29/99	Litigation Report - 1999 - 2
2. SECY-99-125	4/30/99	Weekly Information Report - Week Ending April 23, 1999
Memoranda		
1. M990505C	5/13/99	Staff Requirements - Briefing on Status of the Maintenance Rule, 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to the Congressman Markey, dated May 3, 1999, concerning questions raised in November 4, 1998 letter about the NRC Operational Safeguards Response Evaluation (OSRE) program; and letter dated February 23, 1999 concerning OSRE and the preparedness of the nuclear industry to respond to a terrorist incident.
2. Letter to Stephen C Collins, dated May 3, 1999, Chairman of the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc, concerning the US Army Corps of Engineers performing cleanup work at the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Project sites without independent regulatory oversight.
3. Letter to Congressman Markey, dated May 3, 1999, concerning four specific suggestions for additional NRC actions on Y2K oversight and request for response to six questions concerning Y2K issues at commercial NPPs.
4. Letter to Congress, dated May 4, 1999, concerning request for information regarding the NRC's continuity of operations and contingency planning in response to the Year 2000 problem.
5. Letter to Congress, dated May 4, 1999, submitting proposed legislation which authorizes appropriations for fiscal year 2000.

May 14, 1999

ENCLOSURE O

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. [NUREG-1600] Revision of NRC Enforcement Policy; Policy Statement: Amendment.
2. 10 CFR 52; AP600 Design Certification; Proposed Rule.
3. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Subcommittee Meeting on Planning and Procedures; Notice of Meeting on June 1, 1999.
4. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Joint Meeting of the Subcommittees on Plan Operations and on Fire Protection; Notice of Meeting on June 23, 1999.
5. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Notice of Meeting on June 2-4, 1999.

Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Nine Mile Point 1

On May 10, 1999, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NMPC) issued a press release announcing its plans to repair the Nine Mile Point Unit 1 reactor core shroud. During the current refueling outage, NMPC identified indications of crack growth around a portion of one of the vertical welds.

Cracking in vertical welds of the core shroud was first identified during a 1997 outage, and the NRC reviewed and approved analyses that showed that the plant could continue operation until the current outage. Based on the results of the current examination of the reactor core shroud and analysis, NMPC has decided to install a pre-planned modification, consisting of clamps over two vertical welds, including the one weld which exhibited some crack growth. As of May 13, 1999, the repair modification for the shroud vertical welds was ongoing and the Region I staff is monitoring resolution of this issue.

Management Meeting with Philadelphia Health and Education Corporation

On May 13, 1999, Region I conducted a Management Meeting with Philadelphia Health and Education Corporation (PHEC). This meeting was held to discuss violations identified during an NRC inspection of PHEC conducted on December 7 and 8, 1998 and March 11 and 25, 1999 and to provide PHEC with a better understanding of NRC expectations concerning effective corrective actions. Two management representatives of PHEC, the Chair of the Radiation Safety Committee and the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO), attended the meeting. At the meeting, the RSO discussed the corrective actions taken in response to the Notice of Violation issued on April 28, 1999. These actions include hiring additional staff and increasing the depth and effectiveness of audits. In addition, the RSO discussed actions to enhance communication between radiation safety and the research laboratories and to improve Radiation Safety Committee participation. RI staff stressed the expectation that corrective actions be effective and lasting. RI staff discussed the importance of the licensee staff being resolute in identifying safety and compliance issues, and aggressive in correcting problems it identifies.

Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending May 14, 1999

Plant Performance Reviews for Pilot Oversight Process

Region II conducted the Plant Performance Review inspection planning for the new oversight process for the pilot plants, Harris and Sequoyah. The inspection plans for the pilot plants will be presented at the industry workshop the week of May 17.

Office of Congressional Affairs
 Items of Interest
 Week Ending May 14, 1999

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING SCHEDULE, NO. 19

OCA Contact	DATE & PLACE	TIME	WITNESS	SUBJECT	COMMITTEE
Madden	Week of 5/17 2318 RHOB	TBA	Markup	H.R. 1656, DOE Commercial Application of Energy Technology	Reps. Sensenbrenner/Brown Science
Combs	05/19/99 366 DSOB	9:30	Markup	S. 608, Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendments	Senators Murkowski/Bingaman Energy & Natural Resources
Keeling	05/20/99 366 DSOB	9:30	TBA	Alleged Chinese Espionage	Senators Murkowski/Bingaman Energy and Natural Resources
Gerke	05/20/99 342 DSOB	10:00	Markup	S. 746, Regulatory Improvement Act; S. 59, Regulatory Right-to-Know	Senators Thompson/Lieberman Governmental Affairs
Gerke	05/20/99 2123 RHOB	10:00	TBA	Electricity Competition, Stranded Costs, and the Environment	Reps. Barton/Hall Energy & Power Commerce
Keeling	05/20/99 342 DSOB	2:30	TBA	Chinese Spying at National Energy Labs	Senators Thompson/Lieberman Governmental Affairs
Gerke	05/25/99 366 DSOB	9:30	TBA	State Progress in Retail Electricity Competition	Senators Murkowski/Bingaman Energy & Natural Resources
Portner	05/27/99 192 DSOB	TBA	Markup	FY00 Energy and Water Development Appropriations	Senators Domenici/Reid Energy and Water Development Appropriations