

May 7, 1997

SECY 97-100

For: The Commissioners

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

Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING MAY 2, 1997

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\*No input this week.

James L. Blaha

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Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards  
Items of Interest  
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Meeting on Skull Valley Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation

On April 24, 1997, staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office held a second pre-application meeting with representatives of Private Fuel Storage, Limited Liability Corporation (PFS), to discuss siting issues associated with the proposed Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at the Skull Valley Goshute Indian Reservation in Utah. At the meeting, PFS indicated that it was taking an extremely conservative approach to seismic issues at the proposed ISFSI site. In addition to PFS and its contractors, a representative of the State of Utah and representatives of several utilities attended the meeting. The meeting was videotaped by Bonneville News which represents a Salt Lake City television station and several Utah radio stations.

Meeting with the Department of Energy Regarding Central Interim Storage Facility

On April 29, 1997, the final pre-application meeting was held between representatives of the Department of Energy (DOE), its associated contractors, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff to discuss proposed submittal of a non-site-specific topical safety analysis report (TSAR) for a central interim storage facility (CISF). DOE still anticipates that this TSAR will be submitted in May 1997. The DOE presentation included an overview of the TSAR objectives and a discussion on the CISF TSAR submittal, chapter by chapter.

The NRC staff noted concerns regarding several items. Specifically, DOE has assumed that the CISF and the monitored retrievable storage facility, as defined in 10 CFR Part 72, are identical for licensing purposes and license term (40 years). The NRC staff responded that this is under review. The NRC staff cautioned DOE about interface requirements (design parameters) and licensing actions between the cask vendors and DOE as the licensee of the proposed CISF.

Department of Energy Closure of First High-Level Waste Storage Tank at Savannah River

On April 24, 1997, the Department of Energy (DOE) initiated the closure of the first of 51 empty high-level waste (HLW) storage tanks at the Savannah River Site in Georgia. This tank, and a second one scheduled to be closed later this month, do not require enhanced cleaning to satisfy existing Nuclear Regulatory Commission criteria for classification of residual tank wastes as "incidental" and thus not subject to NRC licensing authority.

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The closure action involved addition of a fluid reducing grout to the tank to both mix with and immobilize any tank residue (the small volume of sludge or "heel" which remains from tank washing). Following the setting or hardening of the initial grout pour, a second pour is made to "sandwich" any sludge that is visible or evident on the surface of the first pour. The "sandwich" of immobilized waste is subsequently topped with layers of both low-strength and high-strength cement to a height of 24 feet or more to provide a protective barrier against a potential inadvertent intruder. The closure of the second HLW storage tank will likely begin the week of May 5, 1997. Prior to closure of any of the remaining 49 HLW storage tanks, NRC plans to evaluate DOE's methodology for the classification of the residual wastes in those tanks.

#### Meeting with the Department of Transportation

On April 29, 1997, staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office met with staff from the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Volpe Transportation Research Center to discuss collaboration on various rail transportation risk assessment efforts currently underway. DOT has compiled a detailed database of the nation's entire Class I rail network, including segment-specific accident probabilities, and is attempting to overlay that database with a characterization of rail wayside hardness derived from satellite imagery. This information would be helpful in Nuclear Regulatory Commission efforts to revalidate the rail spent fuel shipment risk estimates contained in NUREG-0170, and in revising the rail portion of the Modal Study. NRC can provide DOT with information on spent fuel cask designs, package release fractions and other information important to DOT in the assessment of rail shipment options they are performing for DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration and the Federal Railway Administration. DOT staff members have accepted our invitation to participate in the next NUREG-0170 progress review meeting, scheduled for the end of June 1997 at Sandia National Laboratories.

#### Participation in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Conference

On April 28-29, 1997, senior staff members from the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) participated in the seventh annual Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Conference sponsored by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The NMSS staff members provided presentations and an overview of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Strategic Assessment Initiatives as part of a forum focusing on collaborative approaches for successful resolution of technical issues. The forum was entitled, "Leading Change, Learning from What Works, Assessing Performance," and was attended by about 75 EH&S Directors from large universities and research institutes from across the United States.

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Nuclear Materials Management and Safeguards Steering Committee Meeting

On April 29, 1997, a Regulatory and International Safeguards Branch staff member participated in a semiannual Nuclear Materials Management and Safeguards Steering (NMMSS) Committee Meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee. Representatives of the Department of Energy (DOE); Nuclear Assurance Corporation (NMMSS contractor); Westinghouse Electric (licensees' representative) and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory also participated. Principal topics of discussion of particular interest to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission included: (1) fiscal constraints on the provision of NMMSS services, (2) status of NMMSS operations, (3) General Accounting Office audit of NMMSS, (4) training of NMMSS users, (5) status of reporting pursuant to the U.S./EURATOM and U.S./Russia Agreements, and (6) status of data editing software developed for NRC licensees. The data editing software will enable the licensees to edit their transaction data input prior to submittal to NMMSS, thereby reducing the error rate and the associated cost of data editing performed by NMMSS staff. In connection with item (1) above, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards staff will be meeting with DOE staff in the near future to discuss cost allocation for NMMSS services and future funding, including the impact of NRC oversight of U.S. Enrichment Corporation.

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Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data  
Items of Interest  
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Participation in the Grainger Lecture Series

On April 29 through 30, 1997, Mr. Rosenthal of the Reactor Analysis Branch participated in the 1997 Grainger Lecture Series at the University of Illinois. The objective of the lecture series was to shed light on the technical, policy changes, and procedural improvements that can be implemented to avoid events such as the western grid disturbances of 1996. Mr. Rosenthal's lecture was on the safety and risk significance of electric grid reliability. Several lectures outlined electric grid reliability concerns associated with industry restructuring. A recurring issue was the question of who would pay for reliability in the competitive market place.

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATIONS (PNs)

- a. PNO-I-97-025, New Hampshire Yankee (Seabrook 1), PROTEST RELATED TO THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF MASS ARREST AT SEABROOK IN 1997
- b. PNO-I-025A, New Hampshire Yankee (Seabrook 1), PROTEST RELATED TO THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF MASS ARREST AT SEABROOK IN 1997 (UPDATE)
- c. PNO-I-97-026, Yankee Atomic Electric Co. (Yankee Rowe 1), YANKEE ROWE REACTOR VESSEL SHIPMENT
- d. PNO-III-97-038, Commonwealth Edison Co. (LaSalle 1 2), PLANNED RESTART DELAYED UNTIL SPRING 1998, CONTRACTORS LAID OFF
- e. PNO-IV-97-021A, Omaha Public Power District (Ft. Calhoun 1), EXTRACTION STEAM LINE BREAK - UPDATE
- f. PNO-IV-97-023, Western Atlas Logging Services, NONRADIATION WORKER EXPOSURE IN AN AGREEMENT STATE
- g. PNO-IV-97-024, Entergy Operations, Inc. (Waterford 3), DROPPED NEW FUEL ASSEMBLY

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Office of Administration  
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U.S. Enrichment Corporation (USEC)

As part of NRC's oversight responsibilities for USEC's gaseous diffusion plants (GDP), staff from the Division of Facilities and Security and the Computer Security and Oversight Section are conducting an inspection of the Paducah GDP from May 5 - 9, 1997. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure that the plant's security program for the protection of classified matter, to include computer security, is in compliance with 10 CFR Part 95, "Security Facility Approval and Safeguarding of National Security Information and Restricted Data," and the plant's approved security plan.

Rules Activity

On April 30, 1997, a proposed rule that would amend Parts 30, 40, 50, 70 and 72 entitled "Self-Guarantee of Decommissioning Funding by Non-Profit and Non-Bond Issuing Licensees," was published in the Federal Register (62 FR 23394). The 90-day public comment period ends July 29, 1997. The rule would allow additional materials licensees and non-electric utility reactor licensees who meet certain financial criteria to self-guarantee funding for decommissioning.

Chief Information Officer  
Items of Interest  
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Significant FOIA/PA Requests Received during the 5-Day Period of  
April 25, 1997 - May 1, 1997:

Record referral from Department of the Navy. (FOIA/PA-97-150)

Radioactive or hazardous materials storage at specific zip codes  
in the state of LA. (FOIA/PA-97-151)

Zion plant, interview notes re 2-21-97 incident related to moved  
control rods. (FOIA/PA-97-152)

CIO position selectee's work/educational background. (FOIA/PA-97-  
153)

Maine Yankee Plant, RELAP5YA emergency core cooling system (ECCS)  
evaluation model. (FOIA/PA-97-154)



Chief Financial Officer  
Items of Interest  
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FY 1997 Budget Execution Report

The second quarter, FY 1997 Budget Execution Report was forwarded to the Chairman and the Commission on April 28, 1997. The report covers the agency's budget execution performance through March 31, 1997. NRC's financial performance continues to improve during the second quarter of the fiscal year when compared with previous years.

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Office of Personnel  
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Arrivals

DUSANIWSKYJ, Michael NRR	FINANCIAL ANALYST (PFT)
HECK, Kenneth NRR	QUALITY OPERATIONS ENGR (PFT)
WARD, William NMSS	SAFETY INSPECTION ENGR (PFT)

Retirements

BATES, Rachael OC	SECRETARY (OA) (OPFT)
MALSCH, Martin OGC	DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL (PFT)
SCROGGINS, Ronald OC	DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (PFT)

Departures

GANIERE, John NRR	ELECTRICAL ENGR (PFT)
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Office of Public Affairs  
Items of Interest  
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Media Interest

Eric Leeds, SPFO, was interviewed by National Public Radio about spent fuel and dry cask storage.

WNBC-TV news in New York interviewed Tom Dragoun, Region I, about the Manhattan College research reactor for a story on non-power reactors in the New York area.

A TV crew attended the meeting on TMI's poor performance at a recent emergency drill.

Bill Beach was interviewed by WTTW-TV regarding the performance of Commonwealth Edison's plants.

School Volunteers Program

Sudhamay Basu, RES, Ron Hernan, Mary Ann Biamonte, and Ray Wharton, NRR, participated as judges in the Prince George's County Science Fair.

Diane Screnci, Region I, spoke to fourth graders at Candlebrook E.S. in King of Prussia, on the NRC's mission. She was interviewed for their school newsletter.

Press Releases

Headquarters:

- 97-066            NRC Proposes to Allow More Licensees to Use Self-Guarantee for Decommissioning Funding
- 97-067            NRC Issues Final Initial Decision on Louisiana Energy Services License Application
- 97-068            NRC Staff to Meet With Public to Discuss Former Defense Logistics Property in Maryland

Regions:

- I-97-43            NRC, VA Medical Center in Baltimore to Discuss Apparent Violations of Agency Requirements at Facility
- I-97-44            NRC Staff to Meet With NU and Public on Millstone
- I-97-45            NRC, VA Medical Center in Wilmington, Delaware, to Discuss Apparent Violations of Agency Requirements

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I-97-46            NRC, TMI to Discuss Emergency Exercise Deficiencies

III-97-40        NRC to Hold Predecisional Enforcement Conference  
                    With Indianapolis Department of Capital Asset  
                    Management on Apparent Violations of NRC Safety  
                    Requirements

III-97-41        NRC Staff Issues Report on Special Inspection of  
                    Improper Control Rod Movement At Zion Unit 1

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Office of International Programs  
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Foreign Visitors

On April 30, representatives of the German Reactor Safety Commission and the French Permanent Reactor Group met with their NRC counterpart organization, ACRS. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information on advanced reactor design safety issues. During the course of their visit, a number of members held discussions separately with the staff and visited our contractor laboratories.

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Region I  
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Visit by NRC Inspector General

NRC Inspector General Hubert Bell and senior members of the OIG staff visited Region I on April 29. Mr. Bell and his staff addressed the Region I staff concerning the purpose and responsibilities of the Inspector General's office, and responded to numerous questions from the briefing attendees.

Predecisional Enforcement Conference with Apgee Berthold

On April 24, 1997, Region I conducted a predecisional enforcement conference with Apgee Corporation/Berthold Systems, Inc. Apgee/Berthold distributes, under NRC license, gauges manufactured in Germany. During an inspection on June 11-13, 1996, the licensee was found to be distributing devices that were not constructed in accordance with the registration certificates issued by NRC. The licensee's distribution of the non-conforming device was stopped, as described in Confirmatory Action Letters issued by Region I. Over the ensuing months, Apgee evaluated the significance of the non-conformance. During the conference, Apgee addressed the apparent violations, provided additional information requested by NRC, provided the results of their root cause analysis, and discussed the corrective actions taken and planned. The staff is reviewing enforcement action.

Meeting with Gamma Industries, Port Norris, NJ

On April 28, 1997, a meeting was held in NRC's Region I office to discuss the future decommissioning activities necessary to confirm that Gamma Industries' Port Norris, New Jersey, facility meets current NRC criteria for release for unrestricted use. The site was used for the fabrication of sealed sources for teletherapy and radiography. The Gamma Industries representatives presented a general outline of how they intended to finish decommissioning the facility. The licensee committed to provide a written version of the decommissioning process to the NRC within 30 days.

Region II  
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Florida Power and Light Company - Turkey Point

On May 1, 1997, Commissioner Nils J. Diaz visited the Turkey Point Nuclear Plant. The Commissioner was accompanied by Johns Jaudon, Director, Division of Reactor Safety, RII. The purpose of the Commissioner's visit was to meet with the resident inspectors, plant management, and complete a plant tour. The Commissioner also made himself available to press after the tour and then to members of the plant staff who wished to speak with him.

U.S. Navy, Predecisional Enforcement Conference

On May 1, 1997, the licensee was in Region II to attend a Predecisional Enforcement Conference. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the apparent violations associated with the Navy's improper shipment of a limited quantity package containing an iodine-125 reagent. When the package was delivered to Brooks Air Force Base in Texas, two of the iodine-125 reagent bottles were broken and the radioactive liquid contents leaked out of the package. NRC and licensee representatives agreed that the radiological significance resulting from the leakage was low; however, NRC findings indicated problems with the licensee's training and radiation safety management oversight in the packaging and transportation of radioactive materials. The licensee representatives described the root causes for the improper shipment and the corrective actions taken to prevent a recurrence in any type shipment of radioactive materials.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Watts Bar

An NRC/TVA/DOE management meeting was held May 1, 1997, in Region II to discuss the tritium production Lead Test Assembly (LTA) Project for the Watts Bar facility. TVA and DOE presented information concerning the project schedule, LTA licensing status and plant procedures required to implement the LTA project at Watts Bar. The Tritium Producing Burnable Absorber Rod(s) (TPBAR) will be loaded into four fuel assemblies. The TPBAR fuel assemblies are scheduled to be loaded in the fall of 1997 during the planned refueling outage.

Duke Power Company - Oconee

On April 22, 1997, Oconee Unit 2 was taken off line due to a failure of a normal reactor coolant system injection line pipe. The failure was in a weld located immediately before the safe end on the High Pressure Injection line 2A1 nozzle. Reactor Coolant leakage increased to 11 gpm over about a 24 hour period. The

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unit was taken to mid-loop conditions for repair. A metallurgical evaluation is underway along with repairs to the line. A Justification for Continued Operation was issued for Units 1 and 3. On May 1, the licensee determined that they had not met their commitments to conduct inservice inspection on these lines for all three units. After reviewing past NDE results for Units 1 & 3, the licensee determined that a loose thermal sleeve exists on Unit 3. On May 1, the licensee began a shutdown on Unit 3. A Justification for Continued Operation is being developed for Unit 1 based upon a different thermal sleeve design.

#### Atlanta Federal Center

During the week of April 28, 1997, the Region II Office relocated to the Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street, SW, Suite 23T85, Atlanta, Georgia. All major services, such as the Incident Response Center, telephones, fax machines, LAN/Autos have been re-connected and are operational.

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Region III  
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Kewaunee Nuclear Power Station

A public meeting between the NRC staff and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation was held onsite on April 30, 1997, to discuss the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance report for the Kewaunee nuclear plant. NRC Region III Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach and Deputy Director of the Division of Reactor Projects Jack Grobe participated in the meeting.

Predecisional Enforcement Conference with Mallinckrodt Medical, Inc.

On April 30, 1997, a predecisional enforcement conference was conducted in the Region III Office, Lisle, Illinois, between management representatives from Mallinckrodt Medical, Inc., Maryland Heights, Missouri, and members of the NRC staff. Discussion focussed on the apparent failure of the company to adequately package a generator. Upon arrival at its destination, the package was surveyed and radiation levels on the surface were found to be slightly over U.S. Department of Transportation limits.

Management Meeting with United States Enrichment Corporation

On May 2, 1997, a management meeting was conducted in the Region III Office, Lisle, Illinois, between management representatives from United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) and members of the NRC staff to discuss corrective actions which are currently being implemented as a result of an independent review of the nuclear criticality safety program at the gaseous diffusion plant in Paducah, Kentucky. The independent review of the program was conducted in accordance with a Confirmatory Action Letter issued on February 28, 1997, by the NRC to USEC.

Management Meeting with Illinois Power Company

On May 1, 1997, a management meeting was conducted in the Region III Office, Lisle, Illinois, between management representatives from Illinois Power Company and members of the NRC staff to discuss the progress and effectiveness of the Clinton Nuclear Power plant's Startup Readiness Plan. NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach, Director of the Division of Reactor Projects James Caldwell and other NRC staff met with Illinois Power Vice President Wilf Connell, Assistant Vice President Wayne Romberg, and other Illinois Power staff. The bi-weekly restart panel meeting focused on hardware and human performance issues. Three currently significant hardware issues involve degraded bus voltage for which Illinois Power is evaluating an unreviewed

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safety question, breaker operability inspections for 6.9 KV, 4 KV and 480 V breakers, and Emergency Core Cooling System suction strainer clogging concerns. The licensee characterized the human performance issues by indicating that management's expectations are now understood across the site by staff, but implementation is not yet consistent. A number of efforts to benchmark performance and complete restart action items were also discussed.

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Region IV  
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Management Meeting With Entergy Operations, Inc. (EOI)

On May 2, 1997, the Regional Administrator and members of the Region IV and NRR staff met with Entergy Operations, Inc. management at the corporate office in Jackson, Mississippi. The meeting was open to public observation. The meeting included presentations concerning performance at each of the EOI sites (Arkansas Nuclear One, Grand Gulf, River Bend, and Waterford 3) as well as corporate oversight activities.

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Office of Congressional Affairs  
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CONGRESSIONAL HEARING SCHEDULE, No. 16					
OCA CONTACT	DATE & PLACE	TIME	WITNESS	SUBJECT	COMMITTEE
Madden	05/06 366 DSOB	9:30	Betsy Moler	Nomination of Ms. Moler as DOE Deputy Secretary	Senators Murkowski/Bumpers Energy & Natural Resources
Gerke	05/07 342 DSOB	10:00	Senator Moynihan, Lawrence Eagleburger	Government Secrecy	Senators Thompson/Glenn Governmental Affairs
Keeling	05/07 419 DSOB	10:00	TBA	Aid to Former Soviet Union & Eastern Europe	Senators Smith/Biden European Affairs Foreign Relations
Gerke	05/08 216 HSOB	9:30	Commonwealth Edison, Union Pacific Resource, PG&E Hydro Licensing, Arch Mineral	Effects of Competition on Fuel Use and Types of Fuel Generation	Senators Murkowski/Bumpers Energy & Natural Resources
Gerke	05/09 Dallas	10:00	TBA	Electricity Deregulation Field Hearings	Reps. Schaefer/Hall Energy & Power Commerce
Gerke	05/22 216 HSOB	9:30	TBA	Financial Implications of Restructuring the Electric Utility Industry	Senators Murkowski/Bumpers Energy & Natural Resources
Gerke	06/12 216 HSOB	9:30	TBA	Benefits and Risks of Restructuring to Consumers and Communities	Senators Murkowski/Bumpers Energy & Natural Resources

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