

November 17, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: John C. Hoyle, Chairman */RA/*
Licensing Support Network Advisory Review Panel

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 13, 1999 MEETING

The first meeting of the Licensing Support Network Advisory Review Panel (LSNARP) took place on October 13, 1999, in Las Vegas, Nevada. All participating organizations were represented:

State of Nevada
Nye County
Coalition of Local Affected Units of Government
National Congress of American Indians
Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force
Nuclear Industry
Department of Energy
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

A brief summary of the meeting's highlights is as follows:

1. **NRC's and Licensing Board's Roles**

Chief Administrative Judge Paul Bollwerk provided the Panel with a short briefing on the new role for the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel (ASLBP) in the development of the Licensing Support Network (LSN). He introduced Mr. Dan Graser as the new LSN Administrator and emphasized the Commission's interest in and support for the LSN in terms of its importance in the adjudication process for the licensing of a high level waste repository.

2. **Establishment of a Technical Working Group**

Mr. Graser reported on the subjects covered on the previous day at a preliminary meeting of the LSNARP's Technical Working Group (TWG). This team of knowledgeable experts representing Panel members will assist the Panel with research, evaluation, and analysis of web-based technologies and will provide recommended technical solutions to the Panel for consideration.

The Advisory Review Panel formally approved a charter for the TWG, and noted Mr. Graser's plan for continued TWG discussions on October 14 and 15.

3. LSN Development Schedule and Guidance Documents

Mr. Graser noted that the currently planned deployment of the LSN in July 2001 would require significant input from the LSNARP by January 2000 in order for the NRC procurement process to follow its proper course. The Panel's advice and recommendations to the LSN Administrator for the preliminary design will be a key component of the analysis to be included in the Administrator's Capital Planning and Investment Control document to support design authorization in the February/March, 2000 time frame.

The Panel then received a brief review and explanation of the LSN Administrator's Guidance Documents containing determinations for establishing and operating a viable Compliance Assessment Program. These documents had been sent to the Panel members in advance of the meeting and were generally familiar to the members.

4. Funding Issue

The Panel discussed the possible need for alternative funding mechanisms to provide necessary resources for participation in the LSN. It was noted that annual appropriations from DOE to the State of Nevada for scientific oversight contained restrictions on use, including a restriction on use for LSN participation. During this discussion, two related issues were explored briefly: DOE's interpretation of the limitations on the use of scientific oversight funding; and, whether participation in the NRC repository licensing process could be interpreted as constituting participation in litigation against the United States.

The DOE Panel member was requested to check on DOE's interpretations on the use of the scientific oversight funding and report back to the Panel.

5. Public Availability of Documentary Material

During his further review of the Guidance Documents, Mr. Graser noted particularly that the Technical Working Group will be asked to study alternatives for making LSN materials available to the public when access through Local Public Rooms ceases in FY 2000.

A discussion followed on the need for many citizens of Nevada to obtain additional basic information on the role and mission of the NRC as distinct from the role and mission of DOE, and how the NRC's licensing and adjudicatory process works, including the basic minimum requirements for participation. Several Panel members thought that NRC should consider ways to provide such information to the citizens of Nevada, especially those in the rural areas. A suggestion was also made that NRC might wish to work closely with librarians across the state to help get them up to speed on the licensing process and on accessing the LSN.

6. DOE Activities

The DOE panel member reported that although the high-level waste program does not have a specific FY 2000 budget element for the LSN, DOE is putting selected major high-level waste products and deliverables on the Web. At present, DOE's Viability Assessment and its Draft Environmental Impact Statement, including their reference documents, are among the documents available on the Web. She reported, however, that search and retrieval within these documents was difficult for most users. Therefore, during the current year more attention would be given to creating additional search tools and finding ways to make the search process more user friendly.

7. UNLV Technology Research

Mr. Tom Nartker and his briefing team from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) described for the Panel the research work being performed by UNLV on information retrieval technology. His team has obtained the software of six large commercial search engines and has been conducting extensive search queries on each one to evaluate their ability to handle a collection containing up to 15 million pages of material. UNLV will be completing its studies of these six products in the near future, and will be submitting its final evaluations to DOE in November. A more thorough report on the two systems the team considers best will be available in December or early January.

8. Schedule for Next Panel Meeting

The Panel has tentatively agreed to meet in January 2000 to discuss the findings and conclusions of the Technical Working Group, and to develop recommendations for the NRC.

cc: ASLBP
OIG
SECY
OGC
NMSS
Members, LSNARP