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INFORMATION REPORT

December 1, 1999

SECY-99-276

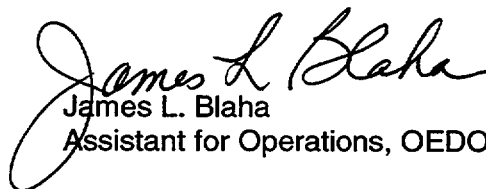
For: The Commissioners
From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
Subject: SECY-99-276 WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK
ENDING NOVEMBER 26, 1999

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*No input this week.


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PDR Comms NRCC Weekly Inform.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

Observation of the Audit of the Biosphere Analysis Modeling Reports

On November 15-19, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management (DWM) and the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses observed a quality assurance audit of three Analysis Modeling Reports (AMRs) supporting the Biosphere Process Modeling Report. The audit was performed by staff from the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, Office of Quality Assurance (OQA) at the Management and Operating (M&O) contractor's offices in Las Vegas, Nevada. The OQA audit team performed a thorough audit and identified four deficiencies and ten recommendations. The deficiencies were related to traceability requirements, implementation, adequacy of procedures for technical product planning, analysis and models, and technical data inputs. The recommendations focused on suggestions for improving the technical product development process.

While most of the data used in the subject AMRs remains "To Be Verified," the observers were able to confirm the proper classification of several sets of "Accepted" data. The observers verified that the software used in the three AMRs has been appropriately qualified. However, no validation of models has been planned or accomplished as the DOE M&O did not appear to clearly understand when, or to which analyses, the model validation should be applied. This issue was expressed as an audit team recommendation, and followed-up with an Observer Inquiry by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission team. The DWM is interested in the DOE and M&O resolution because appropriately validated models are essential to develop licensing information. An additional Observer Inquiry was issued to track the resolution of an audit team recommendation concerning the lack of specific requirements to document the resolution of individual technical check and review comments.

Mill Tailings Ground Water Working Group Meeting

On November 18-19, 1999, representatives from the Division of Waste Management (DWM), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Navajo and Hopi Tribal Nations held a working group meeting to discuss the status of groundwater clean up at uranium mill tailings sites under the DOE program. Participants discussed ways to define the extent of groundwater contamination and the active and passive groundwater cleanup alternatives that are and may be used by DOE at four sites located on the Navajo and Hopi Indian Reservations. Over the coming year, it is anticipated that DWM staff will be involved in additional working group interactions with DOE and the affected Tribes to resolve concerns on which agreement could not be reached in this meeting.

Technical Exchange on Q-List and Integrated Safety Analysis

On November 16, 1999, in Las Vegas, Nevada, staff from the Division of Waste Management participated in a technical exchange with the Department of Energy (DOE) and its Management and Operating (M&O) contractor under Appendix-7 of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)/DOE pre-licensing agreement. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss DOE's approach to classifying items important to safety and waste isolation, and performing an

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integrated safety analysis as required by the proposed 10 CFR Part 63. DOE's earlier Q-list, based on functional classification, consisted of nine categories of items which were eventually consolidated under five categories. In its current approach, DOE is considering risk significance as a basis for classification. Under its new Q-list, the five categories have been mapped into three quality levels, QL-1, QL-2, and QL-3.

DOE explained that the repository and waste package designs are still in conceptual levels and therefore, the items on the Q-list are currently at the "systems" level, and not at the "structures and components" level. Because of the current DOE focus on site recommendation, only minimal efforts are directed at expanding the Q-list to the next level of refinement. The NRC staff observed that the risk basis classification of items on the current Q-list appears to be a rearrangement of the previous Q-list, which was based on functional classification. NRC will obtain DOE's hazard analyses, event sequences, and dose calculations used as bases for coming up with the risk-based Q-list and will provide feedback. DOE provided a draft white paper on its approach to conducting an integrated safety analysis and a contractor paper on the level of detail of design to be included in the license application. The staff will also review these two documents and provide feedback to DOE.

High-Level Waste Disposal Criticality Meeting

On November 18, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management and the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses met with representatives from the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program (NNPP) at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory to discuss the NNPP's report, "Addendum to the Disposal Criticality Analysis Methodology Topical Report for Naval Spent Nuclear Fuel," which presents NNPP's approach in analyzing the criticality aspect of naval spent nuclear fuel disposal at the proposed Yucca Mountain repository. On October 29, 1999, the NNPP had submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission this addendum to the Department of Energy's "Disposal Criticality Analysis Methodology Topical Report." During this meeting, the staff provided feedback to NNPP on the staff's 30-day acceptance review. An additional meeting will be scheduled to clarify the NNPP's request before the staff can issue its acceptance letter for the detailed technical review of the NNPP's report.

Technical Exchange on Thermal-Mechanical Aspects of Repository Design

On November 17-18, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management (DWM) conducted a technical exchange with the Department of Energy (DOE) and its Management and Operating (M&O) Contractor in Las Vegas, Nevada, under the pre-licensing agreement (Appendix-7). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the open items identified in the Issue Resolution Status Report (IRSR) for the Repository Design Thermal-Mechanical Effects Key Technical Issue. The discussions were focused mainly on: (1) laboratory and in situ test data; (2) analytical and numerical models for conducting continuum and discontinuum analyses; (3) ground support design; and (4) inputs to pre- and post-closure performance assessments.

The DOE and M&O staffs made a number of presentations to address issues raised in the IRSR related to the interpretation of rock properties and input data used in the analyses presented in the most current design documents. The DWM staff and contractors raised many questions related to rock strength and modulus and their degradation with time under sustained thermal loading conditions, and pointed out the paucity of thermal-mechanical in situ test data

and the inconsistent interpretations in some of the DOE analyses presented to date. DOE noted several points as follow-up items, and agreed that alternative approaches should be explored as a result of many detailed clarifications provided by the DWM staff and contractors during the in-depth discussions. Both DOE and DWM, and observers (Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board), concluded that the discussions were very helpful in making progress toward issue resolution at the staff level.

Private Fuel Storage Application Meetings

Staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office, the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, and the Office of the General Counsel traveled to the Salt Lake City, Utah, area for a series of meetings and site visits associated with the ongoing review of the Private Fuel Storage (PFS), L.L.C., application. On November 16, 1999, the staff and its support contractor, the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (Center), met in an open public meeting with representatives of PFS to discuss open issues associated with the safety review. Representatives from the state of Utah attended the meeting. Staff members also took part in two site visits on November 16, 1999. One group visited the reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians, where the proposed PFS facility would be located. Another group visited the site of the proposed rail line which would link the proposed PFS site with the main rail line.

On November 17, 1999, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff and the Center met with representatives of the Air Force at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah. The purpose of this meeting was for the staff to get a better understanding of current military air operations in the vicinity of the reservation of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians and surrounding portions of Skull Valley, Utah. The staff also provided the Air Force representatives with an overview of the NRC's role in review of the license application from PFS.

Meeting with Surface Transportation Board on Private Fuel Storage Environmental Impact Statement

On November 16, 1999, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) met with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to discuss the Private Fuel Storage (PFS) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The STB is an independent adjudicatory body, administratively housed within the Department of Transportation, responsible for the economic regulation of interstate surface transportation, primarily railroads, within the U.S. PFS has submitted to the STB a letter of intent to file an application. The application will request approval to construct a 32-mile rail line in Skull Valley, Utah. The rail line would be used to transport spent nuclear fuel to the proposed PFS independent spent fuel storage installation. Typically, STB prepares an EIS prior to granting approval of rail line construction applications. In lieu of preparing its own EIS, STB has expressed interest in becoming a cooperating agency on the EIS being prepared by NRC, BLM, and BIA.

The focus of the meeting was to provide STB with an overview of the structure and scope of the EIS to determine if it would satisfy their National Environmental Policy Act requirements. The staff also discussed the schedule for the PFS EIS. Based on the results of this meeting, the NRC will work with STB to develop a memorandum of understanding for STB to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the PFS EIS.

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Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

USA-CIS Joint Conference on Hydrologic Issues

On November 7-10, RES staff participated in the Fourth USA/CIS (formerly USSR) Joint Conference on "Hydrologic Issues of the 21st Century Affecting the Ecology, Environment and Human Health." The conference was organized by the American Institute of Hydrology in cooperation with major Federal agencies (Department of State, DOE, EPA, and NRC). The organizing committee was composed of US and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) scientists (principally from the Russian and Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and principal state universities).

Of particular interest were technical sessions on the Chernobyl and Mayak environmental studies and on nuclear waste disposal and isolation. Detailed modeling studies of radionuclide transport at the Chernobyl site were presented by scientists from the Radioecological Center of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences. These studies included radionuclide uptake by plants, migration of atmospherically deposited radionuclides, and leakage from the Chernobyl Unit 4 containment "shelter" to the ground water. Effects of ground-water use and surface/ground-water interactions on radionuclide transport within the Chernobyl exclusion zone were also presented. For the Mayak site (located in the southern Ural Mountains), PNNL and LBNL scientists presented large-scale ground-water models and geochemical analyses that have been developed to assist their Russian colleagues who are monitoring radionuclide concentrations in both the surface water (reservoirs and rivers) and the ground water. The Russians will be using the ground-water models in combination with the monitoring data to identify and utilize remediation strategies to reduce offsite releases.

The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion that identified the principal lessons learned, significant data, and citable technical references for the Chernobyl and Mayak environmental studies. RES staff are working with the conference's technical program chair and DOE/Environmental Measurements Laboratory sponsors to develop a summary of the roundtable discussions for publication.

RES Technical Report on Scrams Issued

RES Technical Report, "Scrams Occurring During Surveillance and Maintenance Activities," has been issued. This study examined all licensee event reports of scrams for the period January 1, 1992, to December 31, 1997, to identify those scrams that occurred during maintenance and surveillance (M&S) activities. Data collected for all scrams identified each as occurring or not occurring during M&S activities; the cause by equipment, personnel, or other problems; and whether the scram was manual or automatic.

As the total number of scrams has been reduced significantly, M&S scrams have decreased proportionally. The ratio of M&S scrams to total scrams has remained essentially constant at 40 percent. The ratio of manual scrams to automatic scrams for the period was 1 to 2.78. In 1997, the ratio increased to 1 to 1.73.

Trottier Now Vice Chairman of ISOE

On October 28, 1999, Ms. Cheryl A. Trottier, Chief of RES's Radiation Protection, Environmental Risk, and Waste Management Branch, was selected as the new Vice Chairman of the NEA Information System on Occupational Exposure (ISOE) steering committee. The ISOE is the mechanism for collecting annual occupational exposure information from commercial nuclear power plants around the world and for exchanging information and experience among its utility and regulatory members. Participation in the ISOE program has facilitated the NRC's efforts to compare and contrast U.S. and foreign nuclear power plant initiatives to avert person-rem by identifying and adopting best practices during common maintenance and operation procedures, which helps to optimize ALARA objectives.

Risk-Informed Plant Notebooks

In support of the new risk-informed plant assessment process, RES transmitted to NRR nine pilot plant notebooks. The risk-informed notebooks stemmed from the generic Risk Information Matrices (RIMs) included in SECY 99-007, Recommendation for Reactor Oversight Process Improvements, but were expanded to capture plant-specific risk insights found in each of the licensees' IPE/IPEEEs. Before release, the notebooks were updated based on feedback from Senior Reactor Analysts (SRAs) working in the field. RES also generated and included in the notebooks risk estimation worksheets to support the Significance Determination Process (SDP). The worksheets link inspection findings to dominant sequences and contributors, a necessary step when estimating the risk of an inspection finding. The worksheet's structure involved substantial input from SRAs and from resident inspectors during their trial use. To facilitate the use of the worksheets, simplified event trees, dependency tables, and success criteria tables specific to each pilot plant were developed and included in the notebooks. Taken together with the RIMs, the notebooks will enable inspectors to focus their attention on the most risk-significant inspection areas and enable a better characterization of their findings with respect to risk.

Regulatory Issue Summary – Information Previously in the AEOD Annual Report

NRC Regulatory Issue Summary (RIS) 99-04 was issued to inform industry that, with the dissolution of the Office for the Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data (AEOD), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will no longer publish the AEOD Annual Report, but certain information that was previously published in the AEOD Annual Report may still be obtained from other sources. The AEOD Annual Report was a convenient way to inform the public about the programs and activities of the office related to nuclear materials, nuclear reactors, and technical training. Most of the information in the annual report was collected from publicly available NRC documents. When AEOD was abolished in March 1999, its functions and responsibilities were assumed or aligned with the offices of Human Resources, Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Nuclear Regulatory Research, and Incident Response Operations. RIS 99-04 identified the sources of the information that are still publicly available, and identified the offices that are now responsible for the information.

Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

Keith J. Schiager, Ph.D.: Withdrawal of Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-20-21)

A document announcing the withdrawal of a petition for rulemaking submitted by Keith J. Schiager, Ph.D., PRM-20-21, was published in the Federal Register on November 23, 1999 (64 FR 65665). The petitioner requested an amendment to the regulations in 10 CFR Part 20 to permit additional methods of disposal for certain low-level radioactive wastes. In withdrawing the petition, the petitioner stated that he concurred with the NRC staff view expressed in an October 1, 1999, letter that the essence of the petition was addressed in part by the proposed changes to 10 CFR Part 35 that are under consideration by the Commission.

Envirocare of Utah, Inc.: Withdrawal of Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-150-2)

A document announcing the withdrawal of a petition for rulemaking submitted by Envirocare of Utah, PRM-150-2, was published in the Federal Register on November 24, 1999 (64 FR 66115). The petitioner requested an amendment that would exempt persons that generate or dispose of very low specific wastes contaminated with special nuclear materials that are not capable of forming a critical reaction from the possession limits specified in the regulations. The petitioner indicated that the NRC Order dated May 7, 1999 (64 FR 27826; May 21, 1999) satisfied the intent of the petition and requested that the petition be withdrawn.

Contract Award

On November 23, 1999, the Division of Contracts and Property management awarded contract number NRC-10-00-004 to John Shorb Landscaping, Inc. as a result of a competitive solicitation (RS-ADM-00-004) for grounds maintenance and snow removal services. The contract period of performance runs from November 24, 1999, to November 30, 2000, with 4 one-year option periods. The contract includes a fixed price of \$59,896 for grounds maintenance services (including phase-in, phase-out) during the base year and \$51,528 for each option year. The contract also includes an estimated \$30,303 per year for snow removal to be performed on an as-needed basis, and a provision for landscape design and refurbishment during the base year (subject to NRC approval). The total value of the contract including all options is \$467,523. The procurement streamlining methods of simplified evaluation criteria and setting a deadline for RFP questions from offerors were utilized to minimize the procurement time to 118 days.

Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 5-Day Period of
November 19, 1999 through November 25, 1999:

Hiroshima, Japan, radiation exposure levels following the atomic bomb detonation and continuing to 12/31/65. (FOIA/PA 2000-0060)

MLTS database, Radio Immunoassay testing, licensed hospitals, on disk. (FOIA/PA 2000-0061)

Cape Cod Bay, Foul Area which is 17 miles east of Boston, MA, dumping permits, 1942 to present. (FOIA/PA 2000-0062)

Air Products & Romic, license at specified sites in CA. (FOIA/PA 2000-0063)

ASCG Inspection Services, 11/25/97 incident involving named individual. (FOIA/PA 2000-0064)

University of Michigan, OI Report 3-97-012, Allegation RIII-97-A-0055. (FOIA/PA 2000-0065)

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Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
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Departures		
WATSON, Gidget	HEALTH PHYSICIST	RIII

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Office of Public Affairs
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Week Ending November 26, 1999

Media Interest

There was press interest in the Labor Department decision concerning an allegor at the Diablo Canyon plant.

Local press attended the San Onofre emergency preparedness drill.

There was press interest in the federal appeals court decision which vacated its own prior decision in the Calvert Cliffs license renewal case.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
99-249	NRC to Hold Workshop January 10-13 on Results of its Pilot Plant Evaluation
99-250	NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to Meet in Rockville, Maryland
Regions:	
I-99-97	NRC Chairman Richard A. Meserve to Hold News Briefing Following Visit to Limerick Generating Station
II-99-55	NRC Staff Proposes \$2,750 Civil Penalty Against Western Soil, Inc. of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico
II-99-56	NRC Staff to Hold Performance Evaluation at Framatome Cogemafuels in Lynchburg
IV-99-39	NRC to Hold "Roundtable Discussion" at Public Meeting November 30 in Auburn on New Reactor Oversight Program
IV-99-40	NRC to Hold "Roundtable Discussion" at Public Meeting December 1 in Omaha on New Reactor Oversight Program

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

Kevin Burke Honored By Taiwan's Nuclear Program

Dr. Yii-Der Chuang, Director of the Science Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in Washington, hosted a dinner on November 17 to honor Kevin Burke, OIP Senior Desk Officer, and recognize his many years of assistance to strengthen the bilateral nuclear safety collaboration between the Taiwan Atomic Energy Council (AEC) and the NRC. Kevin was presented with a plaque by AEC Vice Chairman Mann-Tchao Wang.

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Office of the Secretary
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Document Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. SRM on SECY-99-241	11/22/99	Rulemaking Plan, Physical Security Requirements for Exercising Power Reactor Licensees' Capability to Respond to Safeguards Contingency Events
Commission Voting Record on 99-241	11/22/99	(same)
2. SECY-99-250	10/14/99	National Materials Program: Request Approval of the Formation of a Working Group on the Increase in the Number of Agreement States and Impact on NRC's Materials Program
SRM on 99-250	11/23/99	(same)
Commission Voting Record on 99-250	11/23/99	(same)
Information Papers		
1. SECY-99-260	11/4/99	Secy-99-260 Weekly Information Report - Week Ending October 29, 1999
2. SECY-99-263	11/8/99	Results of the Staff's Evaluation of Ongoing Feedback from Licensees Regarding the Impact of NRC's Activities on Licensees' Operations
Memoranda		
1. M991119	11/19/99	Staff Requirements - Affirmation Session, Friday, November 19, 1999 - I. SECY-99-261 - North Atlantic Energy Service Corp. (Seabrook Station, Unit 1) and Northeast Nuclear Energy Co. (Millstone Station, Unit 3), Docket Nos. 50-443-LT and 50-423-LT (consolidated), Joint Motion to Terminate Proceeding

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2. M991108	11/19/99	Staff Requirements - Briefing on Integrated Review of Decommissioning Requirements, Monday, November 8, 1999
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Federal Register Notices Issued

1. 10 CFR Part 26; Docket No. PRM-26-2; Barry Quigley; Notice of Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking
2. Pilot Program Evaluation Panel; Meeting Notice for December 8 and 9, 1999
3. Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste; Notice of Meeting on December 14-16, 1999
4. ACRS Subcommittee on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment; Notice of Meeting on December 15-16, 1999
5. GPU Nuclear Corp.; Docket No. 50-219-OLA-2; Establishment of Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (Rosenthal/Kelber/Lam)
6. Northeast Nuclear Energy Company (Millstone Nuclear Power Station, Unit 3); Docket No. 50-443-LA-3; Change in Time and Location of Prehearing Conference

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Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

Haddam Neck Major Component Removal

Major component removal from containment continues at Haddam Neck. As of November 23, 1999, three of the four lower steam generator assemblies have been removed from the containment building and transported to an on-site storage location. The last lower assembly will be moved the week of November 29, 1999. These portions of the steam generators will be shipped by barge to the Barnwell Radioactive Disposal Facility as soon as the Savannah River is capable of accepting these heavy ocean-going loads. During the week of November 15, 1999, the fourth and final upper steam generator dome was transported to an off-site rail head for transport to a facility in Tennessee for surveying and decontamination as necessary for eventual disposal or reuse. Also, isolation of electrical and mechanical systems began for the removal of the pressurizer, which is scheduled for December.

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Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 26, 1999

Tennessee Valley Authority - Closed Predecisional Enforcement Conferences

On November 22, closed Predecisional Enforcement Conferences were held with two employees of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the Region II office to discuss apparent violations of 10 CFR 50.5 and 50.7.

Victor E. Rivera Associates and Western Soil, Inc.

On November 22 and November 24, Region II issued a Severity Level III violation to Victor E. Rivera Associates and a proposed Civil Penalty of \$2,750 to Western Soil, Inc. Both cases involve a Severity Level III violation for the failure to adequately secure licensed material. Enforcement discretion was exercised to not issue a civil penalty for Victor E. Rivera Associates.

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