

INFORMATION REPORT

November 23, 1999

SECY-99-271

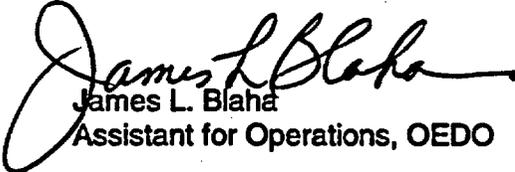
For: The Commissioners
From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
Subject: SECY-99-271 WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK
ENDING NOVEMBER 19, 1999

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Enclosure

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*No input this week.


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PDR COMMIS NRCC Weekly Inform.

Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 19, 1999

Advanced Copy of Industry Decommissioning Commitments Arrives

The Probabilistic Safety Assessment Branch has received from the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) an advanced copy of industry commitments to reduce the risk from spent fuel pools at decommissioning plants. The list is more comprehensive than the one discussed by NEI during the 2-day workshop on decommissioning risk in July 1999. Implementation of such commitments is considered by the staff to be an essential step in addressing decommissioning issues. We expect the NEI letter to be formally submitted shortly.

Inspection of Recirculation Nozzle Welds

During a conference call held on November 9, 1999, IES Utilities (the licensee) informed NRC that crack-like indications were found on two recirculation inlet nozzle to safe-end welds (risers "B" and "D") at Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC). The subject nozzle welds are dissimilar metal welds (Alloy 600 to low alloy carbon steel). These indications were identified by ultrasonic examination (UT) using automated GE SMART 2000 system with Tomoview equipment performed by General Electric company during the current refueling outage. All indications were reported to be on the safe-end side of the welds. On the "B" riser nozzle to safe-end weld, two indications about 2 inches in length were found. One indication was initiated at the weld root with a depth about 44% of the wall thickness and the other indication was initiated at the safe-end about 0.2 to 0.3 inch from the weld root with a depth about 65% of the wall thickness. The safe-end at the flaw locations has about a one-inch wall thickness. One indication with a length of 3.5 inches and a depth about 63% of wall thickness was found on riser "D" nozzle weld. The licensee stated that the subject safe-ends were replaced in 1978; that hydrogen water chemistry has been implemented since 1987 and the noble metal chemistry addition process was applied during 1996 outage. For the riser "B" nozzle weld, the last UT examination was performed with manual UT in 1992 and no crack-like indication was reported. For the riser "D" nozzle weld, the previous UT examination was performed with GE automated equipment with TOMOSCAN in 1996. However, in 1996, the subject indication was characterized as a metallurgical reflector and the depth of the reflector was not reported. The licensee re-evaluated the data with TOMOVIEW and concluded it was present in 1996. The length was the same in 1996 as in 1999.

The original scope of the UT inspection consisted of three such dissimilar welds. With the finding of the crack-like indications, the inspection sample was expanded to include ten nozzle to safe-end welds (eight recirculation riser nozzle welds and two core spray nozzle welds). At this time, the licensee has completed inspection of four recirculation nozzle welds and one core spray nozzle weld. The licensee plans to repair the flawed nozzle welds with weld overlay using Alloy 52 material.

The staff will continue to follow up the licensee's inspection results including its planned weld overlay repairs. The staff also plans to discuss with the BWRVIP the effectiveness of past UT inspections of dissimilar welds to ensure inspection method, equipment and personnel used in such inspections are capable of finding flaws.

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Approval of EPRI Risk-Informed Inservice Inspection Evaluation Procedure (Topical Report EPRI TR-112657, Revision B, July 1999) on Application of Risk-informed Methods to Piping Inservice Inspection

The NRC staff has completed its review of the subject Topical Report which was submitted by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) by letter dated July 29, 1999. On October 28, 1999, the staff issued the safety evaluation (SE) which discusses the adequacy of the EPRI methodology for developing a risk-informed inservice inspection program, and indicates its applicability and implementation at individual plants. The staff has found that this topical report is acceptable for referencing in licensing applications to the extent specified and under the limitations delineated in the report and the associated NRC safety evaluation. Licensees who follow the approved methodology and the template developed jointly by the staff and the industry can send an abbreviated submittal and expect an expedited staff review.

The SE was reviewed by ACRS on September 2, 1999. ACRS endorsed issuing the SE by letter dated September 15, 1999. The SE incorporates ACRS comments.

The completion of the EPRI SE on risk-informed inservice inspection is item A.4 on the Chairman's Tasking Memorandum and was scheduled to be completed on 10/31/99.

Callaway - Plant Restarting From 10th Refueling Outage

The Callaway Plant, Unit 1, in Callaway County, Missouri, is at 100% power after restarting from its tenth refueling outage that began October 2, 1999. The plant went critical on Thursday, November 4, 1999. The plant held power at 94% on November 10, 1999, to perform core calibrations and flux map of the core. The refueling outage was 35 days long. The major work during the outage was the following: Electro sleeve steam generator tubes, Class 1 snubber reduction, steam generator feedwater check valve replacement, MOV control circuits (hot short issue) modification, essential service water A pump replacement, and replacement of low pressure heater 1A and 1B.

Reactor Oversight Process Improvements

The Inspection Program Branch staff attended the Division of Reactor Projects Directors' counterpart meeting on October 28 through 29, 1999, at Region II to discuss the implementation issues with the oversight process pilot program and other policy and program issues. This meeting provided valuable feedback and insights.

The Technical Training Center (TTC) conducted the Revised Reactor Oversight Process Training for NRC inspectors in Region IV during the week of November 15, 1999. Two training sessions per region are planned. The training will be completed for all regions in April 2000.

The Pilot Program Evaluation Panel (PPEP) held its third meeting on November 16-17, 1999, in Rockville, MD, to hear comments on the new reactor oversight process from NRC staff, and individuals representing states, industry, and public interest groups. The PPEP includes NRC staff from headquarters and regional offices, a representative of the Nuclear Energy Institute, and representatives from participating licensees, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and representative from a state. Representatives from the states of Nebraska, New York, and New

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Jersey participated in this meeting. The PPEP is chaired by the Deputy Director of the Division of Inspection Program Management, Frank Gillespie. The panel meets periodically to review data being supplied by NRC licensees on plant performance, as well as the results of NRC's baseline inspection, assessment and enforcement activities. At the end of the pilot program, which began June 1, 1999, the panel will prepare a written report representing the views of the panel members. The NRC will use the report to consider whether any changes to the new oversight program should be made before it is fully implemented next year.

On November 15, 1999, the Inspection Program Branch staff started the review of Baseline Inspection procedures and incorporating comments received from the regions. This review is scheduled for three weeks (November 15, December 6, and December 13, 1999). The review team consists of staff from the Inspection Program Branch and regional inspectors.

Risk-Informed Technical Specification Task Force Activities

On November 10, 1999, the staff met with the industry's Risk-Informed Technical Specification Task Force (RITSTF) at NRC Headquarters. This meeting was the latest in a series of meetings with industry on the subject of the creation of a fully risk-informed set of standard technical specifications (RI-STs). These meetings were held as a follow-up to the Licensing Managers' Workshop held in July 1998. The issue of the creation of a RI-STs was one of the issues that the NRC staff committed to pursue further at that workshop.

The RITSTF consists of representatives from the four Nuclear Steam Supply System Owners Groups, the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Electric Power Research Institute, and industry contractors. The RITSTF and the NRC staff discussed the need to develop a strategic vision for RI-STs. Both the industry and the staff presented ideas in this regard. The industry explained how the current set of risk-informed initiatives being pursued fit into their strategic vision. These current initiatives are comprised of seven risk-informed changes to the current set of STs. The RITSTF discussed the proposed schedule for these seven items and expects submittals beginning in November 1999 and continuing through 2001. In addition, some licensees expressed strong interest in pursuing, on a fairly ambitious schedule, adoption of a fully risk-informed set of technical specifications that would rely on a PRA-based configuration risk management program. The RITSTF and the staff also discussed the relationship of the RITSTF efforts to the risk-inform 10 CFR Part 50 and to the revised maintenance rule, 10 CFR 50.65(a)(4).

The RITSTF and the staff will be making a joint informational presentation to the Advisory Committee for Reactor Safeguard's PRA Subcommittee on December 16, 1999, to discuss the strategic vision for RI-STs and how the current initiatives fit into that vision. The staff has two teleconferences and a meeting scheduled with representatives from the RITSTF before the ACRS meeting. The staff and industry participants tentatively agreed to another meeting of the full RITSTF in February 2000.

**Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 19, 1999**

Commissioner Merrifield Visits Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant

On November 12, 1999, Commissioner Merrifield visited the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant at Paducah, Kentucky. Senator Bunning (Kentucky) toured the facility with Commissioner Merrifield. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Resident Inspection staff (Senior Resident Inspector and Resident Inspector from Region III) led the tour through the U.S. Enrichment Corporation enrichment facilities and around the site. Commissioner Merrifield and Senator Bunning were also shown Department of Energy (DOE) Material Storage Areas and a few other DOE activities as part of the tour. Commissioner Merrifield and Senator Bunning held separate press conferences with local press after the tour.

Meeting on Schedule for Completing Seismic Upgrade at Paducah

On November 15, 1999, staff from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards (FCSS), the U.S. Enrichment Corporation (USEC), a Congressional staffer from the House Commerce Committee, and Department of Energy (DOE) representatives from DOE Headquarters, the DOE Oak Ridge Operations office, and the DOE Paducah field office met to discuss USEC access to DOE controlled areas to complete seismic modifications to cascade buildings 331 and 335 at the Paducah gaseous diffusion plant as required under the Compliance Plan. USEC presented assumptions they will use to develop a schedule to complete the required seismic modifications. The schedule will optimize completing the seismic modifications as quickly as possible. USEC agreed to provide the schedule during the week of November 29, 1999, and a tentative meeting to discuss the schedule was set for December 2, 1999, at the Paducah gaseous diffusion plant. USEC also agreed to prepare an alternate schedule by December 15, 1999, which will accommodate both the seismic modifications and complete criticality characterization of the DOE controlled areas. This is DOE's preferred approach. FCSS staff are concerned that this alternative schedule could significantly delay completion of the seismic modifications. Following completion and comparison of the two schedules, the staff plans to consult with the Commission to determine the appropriate action.

Mixed Oxide Licensing Meeting

On November 16-17, 1999, Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards staff met with Duke, Cogema, Stone & Webster (DCS) to discuss technical aspects of the mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility. DCS intends to submit an application for construction authorization to build a MOX fuel fabrication facility in September 2000. Technical aspects discussed include nuclear criticality safety, integrated safety analyses, design bases, natural phenomena hazards, the quality assurance program, and classification of structures, systems, and components. Additional meetings are anticipated over the next few months to discuss other technical topics.

Nuclear Materials Management and Safeguards System Steering Committee Meeting

On November 16, 1999, the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards hosted a meeting of the U.S. Nuclear Materials Management and Safeguards System (NMMSS) Steering

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Committee. The steering committee addressed issues related to the operation of the U.S. national nuclear materials accounting system data base. The meeting addressed the NMMSS proposed upgrade to change the currently used data base to state-of-the-art software, reporting transaction errors, data submittal by the internet, obligations tracking, and other topics. To make the steering committee more responsive to user needs, the composition of the steering committee will be reviewed and a proposal for revisions made prior to the next steering committee meeting.

Meeting with the Northeast High-Level Radioactive Waste Transportation Task Force

On November 16, 1999, Spent Fuel Project Office staff met with the Northeast High-Level Radioactive Waste Transportation Task Force, consisting of state representatives involved with emergency planning, to discuss spent fuel storage and transportation issues. The state governments participating in the meeting were from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. The Department of Transportation and the Department of Energy also participated in the meeting, which was hosted by the Pennsylvania State Emergency Management Agency and was held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards Hosts Counterpart Meeting with Regions

On November 16-17, 1999, Branch Chiefs from the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS), met with their regional counterparts at Nuclear Regulatory Commission Headquarters. These managers are responsible for nuclear materials, fuel cycle safety and safeguards, waste and decommissioning, and spent fuel activities. Managers from all four NMSS Divisions and all four Regions participated. The attendees discussed policy and technical issues of mutual interest related to materials regulation.

Update on the Department of Energy Pilot Source Recovery Program

The Department of Energy (DOE) has recovered an initial round of Americium-241:Beryllium (AmBe) sources under its pilot source recovery program. As of November 16, 1999, DOE's contractor had recovered 20 AmBe sources from four licensees and one state agency, including 11 sources from Carolina Nuclear Instruments, a former North Carolina licensee whose situation generated significant media interest earlier this year. The Carolina Nuclear Instruments sources are Greater Than Class C waste in accordance with the waste classification in 10 CFR Part 61.55, and the former licensee had possessed the sources without a license for several years and had no viable options for transfer or disposal of the sources. The state of North Carolina requested, through the Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety, DOE assistance in the recovery and disposition of the sources to protect the public health and safety. DOE plans to have their contractor recover approximately 60 additional sources under the pilot program over the next year.

Meeting with Atlas Trustee

On November 10, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management and the Office of the General Counsel met with Keith Eastin of Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP (PWC). PWC had recently been chosen to be the Trustee for the uranium mill tailings site in Moab, Utah, currently licensed to Atlas Corporation, which has filed for bankruptcy. Under terms of the bankruptcy

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agreement, the assets related to the Moab mill tailings site will be transferred to a Trust, with the license transferred to the Trustee. PWC will sign a Trust Fund Agreement with Atlas Corporation in the near future. After approval by the bankruptcy court, expected in early December, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will issue an Order transferring the license to PWC.

This was the initial meeting between the NRC staff and PWC. NRC staff discussed the site, including aspects of the approved reclamation and the groundwater cleanup program with Mr. Eastin. Details related to the Trust Fund Agreement and the Order and the timing of some of the actions required by the license were discussed, as was PWC participation in public meetings.

Observation of Audit of Waste Package Analysis Modeling Reports

During November 8-12, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management and the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (Center) observed a Quality Assurance (QA) audit of four Analysis Modeling Reports (AMRs) supporting the Waste Package Process Modeling Report. The audit was performed by staff of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) 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 and professional audit, and made a number of recommendations which will improve the information included in the AMRs. Recommendations were also made to improve the various processes under which AMRs are developed, and to clarify some QA procedural requirements. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Center observers were unable to verify either the qualification and traceability of the data included in the AMRs, or the qualification of computer codes used in the AMRs, since reverification and/or qualification had not been completed for any of the data or codes. Overall, the observers found the M&O contractor's progress in reverification of data and verification of computer codes to be less than expected, based on the latest completion dates provided by DOE.

Meeting with Senator Barbara Boxer's Staff on Types of Radioactive Waste

On November 18, 1999, staff from the Division of Waste Management and the Office of Congressional Affairs met with a staff member from Senator Barbara Boxer's office to review the various types of radioactive waste, including: their origins; their physical, chemical and radiological characteristics; and how they are disposed of. The staff member was also interested in the disposal of radioactive materials at hazardous waste facilities, such as the Buttonwillow facility in California. The staff's presentation included a discussion of NORM and its similarities with some materials regulated under the Atomic Energy Act.

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**Incident Response Operations
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 19, 1999**

Post -Plume Phase Exercise in the State of Arizona

An IRO staff member led a team of Federal responders, as Lead Federal Agency On-scene Commander, in a post-plume phase exercise conducted by the State of Arizona in conjunction with the Palo Verde nuclear power plant on November 16, 1999. This exercise was the six year cycle post-plume phase exercise that was evaluated by FEMA. The Federal I-team (ingestion team) was composed of representatives from NRC Region IV, Department of Energy Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center (FRMAC), USDA and FDA (the Advisory Team on the Environment Food and Health). In addition, a representative from the American Nuclear Insurers participated. The scenario was based on a release from the power plant that resulted in radiological deposition in an easterly direction out about 17-21 miles from the facility. A number of mock press conferences were conducted with Federal participation as a part of the scenario. The Federal representatives worked closely in support of State and local decision makers in developing a preliminary monitoring and sampling plan, reentry, relocation, return and recovery plans. During the critique, at the conclusion of the exercise, the State and local decision makers were very complimentary of the support and assistance rendered by the Federal agency participants. This participation is an integral part of IRO's State Outreach program designed to communicate Federal resources in support of State and local organizations in a major radiological event. IRO has been participating in every post-plume phase exercise for the last few years.

Preliminary Notifications:

1. PNO-III-990947A, Abb Combustion Engineering, UPDATE; NRC INSPECTORS EVALUATING WORK AT PLANT AMID STRIKE
2. PNO-IV-99055, Price Construction, STOLEN PORTABLE MOISTURE/DENSITY GAUGE
3. PNO-III-99-050, Mallinckrodt, Inc., DECLARATION OF ALERT DUE TO UNFILTERED RELEASE OF XENON-133

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**Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 19, 1999**

Contract Award

On November 15, 1999, the Division of Contracts and Property Management awarded contract No. NRC-09-00-300 to Owusu and Company CPAs, Inc. as a result of an 8(a) set aside noncompetitive negotiation process. The contractor will provide the Office of the Chief Financial Officer with data entry services for various accounting systems. The contract is a fixed price type contract, and the period of performance runs from November 15, 1999, to November 30, 2000, with 4 one-year option periods. The total value of the contract, including all option years is valued at \$2,880,000. The contract was awarded in 45 days utilizing the following streamlining measures: (1) simplified proposal content, (2) electronic receipt of the SOW, and (3) the new SBA/NRC MOU eliminating need for tripartite award document.

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Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
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Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 5-Day Period of
November 12, 1999 through November 18, 1999:

Nuclear generating capacity, daily archived data for 1993 and 1994. (FOIA/PA 2000-0047)

Rector Programs System (IP) Report - Actual Hours by Inspection Report Summary for 1998, sorted by site name. (FOIA/PA 2000-0048)

Referral from DOE. (FOIA/PA 2000-0049)

Reed-Keppler Water Park, West Chicago, IL, site contamination and effects on human life. (FOIA/PA 2000-0050)

Oconee site, mispositioned fuel assembly problem investigation process no. 5-096-0040. (FOIA/PA 2000-0051)

170 W Providencia St., Burbank, CA, all records from 1/1/60 forward. (FOIA/PA 2000-0052)

Electrosleeve Repair of Steam Generator Tubes, 5/29/99 letter from A. C. Thadani, RES, to S. J. Collins, NRR. (FOIA/PA 2000-0053)

Department of Veterans Affairs and Loma Linda Veterans Administration Hospital correspondence leading up to Inspection # 030-13550/99-01. (FOIA/PA 2000-0054)

Radioimmunology Guided Surgery (RIGS) study, oversight investigation and correspondence between Dept. of Veterans Affairs and Loma Linda Veterans Administration Hospital. (FOIA/PA 2000-0055)

Individual, allegation file RIV-1998-A-0202, Dept. of Veterans Affairs and Loma Linda Veterans Administration Hospital. (FOIA/PA 2000-0056)

IMPAC listing. (FOIA/PA 2000-0057)

St. Lucie plant, Florida Power and Light, endangered and threatened sea turtles, 1996 through 1999, and videos since 1977 to present. (FOIA/PA 2000-0058)

OIG report 99-061, 1811 Series Classification of OI Investigators. (FOIA/PA 2000-0059)

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Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
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Arrivals		
KUYAWA, Marisa	TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANT	RIV
YOUNG, Thomas	HEALTH PHYSICIST*	NMSS
Departures		
BARTLEY, Caro	RECORDS MANAGEMENT TECHNICIAN	RIV
ELDER, Jerry R.	SECRETARY (OA)	OCFO

*TRANSFERRED FROM REGION III

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**Office of Public Affairs
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Media Interest

OPA received some calls on the NBC movie "Y2K" and its depiction of nuclear plant meltdowns and plutonium misuse that was scheduled to be televised on November 21, 1999.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
99-244	NRC to Meet With State Liaison Officers
99-245	NRC to Hold Chicago Meeting on Control of Solid Materials From Licensed Facilities
99-246	Note to Editors: ACRS meeting December 1
99-247	NRC Issues Safety Evaluation Report on Calvert Cliffs License Renewal Application
99-248	NRC Issues Notice to Fuel Facilities to Ensure Controls Exist to Prevent Criticality Accidents
Regions:	
I-99-95	NRC Assigns New Senior Resident Inspector at Oyster Creek Nuclear Plant
I-99-96	NRC to Meet With Consolidated Edison to Discuss Performance at Indian Point 2 Nuclear Plant

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Office of the Secretary
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Document Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. SECY-99-259	11/1/99	Exemption in 10 CFR Part 40 for Materials Less than 0.05 Percent Source Material - Options and Other Issues Concerning the Control of Source Material
2. SECY-99-258	11/2/99	Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: 10 CFR Parts 71 and 73 - "Advance Notification to Native American Tribes of Transportation of Certain Types of Nuclear Waste"
3. SECY-99-264	11/8/99	Proposed Staff Plan for Risk-Informing Technical Requirements in 10 CFR Part 50
Information Papers		
1. SECY-99-255	10/29/99	SECY-99-255 Weekly Information Report - Week Ending October 22, 1999
2. SECY-99-257	10/29/99	Nuclear Regulatory Commission Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Bureau of Investigation
Memoranda		
1. M991110	11/17/99	SRM - Briefing on Draft Maintenance Regulatory Guide

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to Congress and OMB, dated November 9, 1999, provides the November 1999 quarterly report on the NRC's Year 2000 efforts.
2. Letter to Senators Robert F. Bennett and Christopher J. Dodd concerns the nuclear industry's Year 2000 readiness (incoming letter dated November 1, 1999, also released).
3. Letter to Representatives John D. Dingell, Ron Klink, and Edward J. Markey concerns the release of materials containing radioactive byproduct material (incoming letter dated October 25, 1999, also released).

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Federal Register Notices Issued

1. 10 CFR Part 20; Docket No. PRM-20-21; Keith J. Schiager, Ph.D.; Withdrawal of Petition for Rulemaking.
2. 10 CFR Part 150; Docket No. PRM-150-2; Envirocare of Utah, Inc.; Withdrawal of Petition for Rulemaking.

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**Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 19, 1999**

NIH Team Inspection

Region I conducted a scheduled team inspection of the broad scope license at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda and Baltimore, MD. In addition to reviewing and observing the wide range of research and medical uses of radioactive materials at NIH, the team examined security of radioactive materials at the licensee's facilities, attended a Radiation Safety Committee meeting, and observed a radiation safety training session.

Oyster Creek Team Inspection

A RI staff member led a team of Regional and NMSS inspectors, along with NRC contracted representatives of the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), at Oyster Creek the week of November 15, 1999. The inspection team collected samples and reviewed the adequacy of the licensee's historical site assessment, in support of an agency decision regarding the sale of a portion of the land at the facility. ORISE collected soil and water samples for analysis. Sample collection was observed by representatives of the State of New Jersey and GPUN, the Oyster Creek licensee. ORISE results in the form of a draft report are expected to be received in late December, with a final report in January.

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Region II
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Commissioner Merrifield Visit to Westinghouse and Oconee Nuclear Plants

On November 15, 1999, Commissioner Merrifield and the Director of the Division of Reactor Safety visited the Westinghouse fuel facility near Columbia, South Carolina. The Commissioner observed the licensee's operations for manufacturing nuclear fuel and fuel assemblies. The Commissioner and licensee managers discussed the licensee's performance and challenges, the status of Agency tasks to address issues in the reactor and fuel facility areas, and feedback on the Agency's regulatory oversight of fuel facilities.

On November 16, 1999, Commissioner Merrifield and the Director of the Division of Reactor Safety visited Duke Energy's Oconee plant. The visit included observation of licensee refueling activities inside the Unit 2 containment and discussion of licensee performance challenges. Licensee representatives included Duke Energy's Nuclear Executive Vice President. The Commissioner elicited feedback from licensee representatives regarding the Agency's proposed reactor oversight program. The Commissioner also held a conference with members of the media from local newspaper and TV news stations. Topics and questions included the Commissioner's observations from visiting the Oconee plant, license renewal, the status of Yucca Mountain and dry cask storage issues, Y2K licensee preparations, and the new reactor oversight program.

Clinton Power Station - Operational Safeguard Response Evaluation

On November 15, 1999, the Deputy Regional Administrator accompanied the Regional Administrator of the Region III Office to the Clinton Power Station in Clinton, IL, to observe an Operational Safeguard Response Evaluation and solicit feedback from the station management on recent NRC initiatives.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Watts Bar Exercise

On November 15, 1999, the Regional State Liaison Officer participated as a member of FEMA's Regional Assistance Committee in the full scale Watts Bar exercise involving officials of the State of Tennessee and local governments. The exercise was successful with no deficiencies identified.

Materials Branch Chief Counterpart Meeting

The Branch Chiefs of the Materials Licensing/Inspection Branches 1 and 2 attended a Materials Branch Chief Counterpart Meeting in Headquarters.

Korean Visitors in Region II

S. Jae Han and J. Lai Kim of the Korean Institute of Nuclear Safety visited the Region II office to meet with staff to discuss NRC procedures for industrial and medical radioisotopes licensing and inspection.

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**Region III
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 19, 1999**

Meeting with American Electric Power Company

The Director, Division of Reactor Safety, and members of the Region III and Headquarters staffs met November 17, 1999, in the regional office with representatives of American Electric Power Company to discuss the licensee's resolution of the issues in the September 19, 1997, Confirmatory Action Letter issued to the D. C. Cook Nuclear Power Station. The licensee reported that it was ready for closure of five of the nine issues in the letter. Region III will conduct an inspection beginning November 29, 1999, to review the status of the issues.

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