

December 13, 1999.

MEMORANDUM TO: Michael D. Tschiltz, Senior Regional Coordinator  
Office of the Executive Director for Operations

FROM: James W. Clifford, Chief, Section 2 ORIG SIGNED BY:  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO CONGRESSMAN LOBIONDO'S STAFF  
(Reference - Green Ticket No. G19990601)

This memorandum provides you with the information requested by Congressman LoBiondo's staff on fire protection issues at Salem Nuclear Generating Station (Salem). Attachment 1 provides the Fact Sheet on the status of fire protection issues at Salem. Attachment 2 provides SECY-99-152, "Status of Reactor Fire Protection Projects," dated June 7, 1999. Should you have any questions please contact the Salem Project Manager, Mr. William C. Gleaves at (301) 415-1479.

Docket Nos. 50-272 and 50-311

Attachments: As stated

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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 13, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO: Michael D. Tschiltz, Senior Regional Coordinator  
Office of the Executive Director for Operations

FROM: James W. Clifford, Chief, Section 2 *Bartholomew C. Buckley for*  
Project Directorate I  
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**FACT SHEET**  
**FOR THE HONORABLE FRANK A. LoBIONDO**  
**REGARDING THE STATUS OF FIRE PROTECTION ISSUES**  
**AT THE SALEM NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION (SALEM)**  
**AND FEDERAL FIRE PROTECTION INITIATIVES**

This fact sheet was written by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in response to a request for an update to our earlier letter dated April 15, 1999.

**Compensatory Measures for Fire Protection Issues at Salem**

The status of progress to resolve fire protection issues and the associated compensatory measures has not changed from the April 15, 1999, letter. Compensatory measures remain in effect for degraded electrical raceway fire barriers. These measures include hourly fire watches in the affected areas, and in a few locations, the addition of fire detection capability to the area. As part of their overall electrical raceway fire barrier project, Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G) has committed to complete the project, including fire barrier upgrades and related modifications, on Unit 1 by May 2002 and Unit 2 by December 2002. The NRC staff continues to monitor PSE&G's progress on this project. Regarding the inspection findings of the triennial inspection (see below), PSE&G is addressing the NRC's concerns by correcting the condition, if practical, putting compensatory measures in place, if needed, and is developing long-term solutions.

**Triennial Fire Protection Inspection at Salem**

Inspections were held from November 15 through December 9, 1999, that reviewed the fire protection program at Salem. The inspection was performed using a draft inspection procedure from the NRC's new pilot inspection program. The inspection took an integrated look at the protection of post-fire safe-shutdown equipment and procedures and used a new risk-informed tool to assess the findings. Thus, the inspection is a test of both the licensee's fire protection capabilities as well as a test of the new inspection and assessment process. Early results suggest that two inspection findings may require further discussion between the NRC and PSE&G to fully understand the significance of the issues. The first issue involves the lack of physical separation of control cables for alternate shutdown equipment. The second issue is a historical issue of degraded electrical raceway fire barriers. The issues will be characterized and their significance determined by NRC management. The associated inspection report, which will discuss these issues and our findings in detail, is due January 24, 2000.

### Penetration Seal Materials

On August 18, 1999, the NRC published for public comment in the *Federal Register* (64 FR 44860-44865) a proposed rule to amend Section III.M of Appendix R to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50 to eliminate the requirement for noncombustible penetration seal materials. (The proposed rule also included several administrative-type changes to the regulation that are not related to fire barrier penetration seals.) The public comment period closed on November 1, 1999. The NRC staff is currently evaluating the public comments and is preparing the final rulemaking package for Commission approval. Our previous response dated April 15, 1999, had forecast a final rule publication date of April 2000. Based on our current forecast, the NRC staff plans to publish the final rule by May 2000.

### Preliminary Draft Regulatory Guide DG-1094

The NRC issued a preliminary draft regulatory guide on October 29, 1999, for public comment (64 FR 58461). The NRC staff developed the draft guide to provide a comprehensive fire protection guidance document, and to identify to the industry the scope and depth of fire protection programs that the staff considers to be acceptable for operating nuclear plants. This preliminary draft guide gives the best available methods for meeting fire protection requirements and objectives that are acceptable to the Commission. The preliminary draft guide has not received complete staff approval and does not represent an official NRC staff position. It was first made available for public comment in October 1999, and the closing date for comments is January 7, 2000. The NRC staff expects to issue the final version in May 2000. Copies can be obtained from the following internet site:

[http://techconf.llnl.gov/cgi-bin/library?source=\\*&library=fire\\_pro\\_lib&file=\\*](http://techconf.llnl.gov/cgi-bin/library?source=*&library=fire_pro_lib&file=*)

### Performance-Based, Risk-Informed Fire Protection Consensus Standard

On October 28, 1998, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) issued for public comment a draft of the proposed NFPA Standard 805, "Performance Based Standard for Light Water Reactor Electric Generating Plants." In March 1999, the NFPA technical committee met to resolve the public comments on the draft standard. Over 400 comments were received on the draft standard. Therefore, the committee decided to delay the completion of the standard until November 2000. The NRC staff informed the Commission of this new schedule in SECY-99-152, "Status of Reactor Fire Projects," (Attachment 2) dated June 7, 1999.

On July 22, 1999, the NFPA issued a revised draft of the proposed NFPA Standard 805 to the technical committee for final review. During the week of September 20, 1999, the NFPA technical committee met to resolve the outstanding public comments on the October 1998 draft standard and to prepare the input for the final draft of the proposed standard. The NFPA will issue the final draft of the proposed standard for a final public comment period on January 21, 2000. The public comment period is scheduled to close on March 31, 2000. After this final public comment period, the technical committee will resolve any comments and prepare the final proposed standard. At that time, the NFPA will complete its internal processing and approval of the standard. The NFPA plans to issue the final standard in March 2001.