

July 5, 2000

Mr. Ralph E. Beedle
Senior Vice President
and Chief Nuclear Officer
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20006-3708

Dear Mr. Beedle:

Thank you for your letter to Mr. Collins and the letter from Ms. Hendricks to me, dated April 3, 2000 and May 17, 2000, respectively. Both letters were associated with industry input on improving power reactor decommissioning regulations, a current initiative undertaken by the NRC staff.

As you are aware, the NRC staff had recommended an initiative for improving power reactor decommissioning regulations to the Commission in SECY-99-168, dated June 30, 1999. The Commission in turn approved the initiative with some modifications, as outlined in the Staff Requirements Memorandum dated December 21, 1999. Since then, the NRC staff has been working on two initiatives. One is associated with a single, integrated risk-informed decommissioning rule and the other is associated with decommissioning regulatory improvements.

In your letter to Mr. Collins, you recommended combining the two initiatives mentioned above. On May 9, 2000, the NRC staff met with members of your staff and public stakeholders to discuss this proposal. After the meeting, Ms. Hendricks, in Nuclear Energy Institute's May 17, 2000, letter recommended an approach to carry out the method you proposed. We plan to meet with your organization around the end of July to discuss the letter from Ms. Hendricks. The NRC staff has reviewed this approach; however, since we were committed to have a rulemaking plan to the Commission by June 30, 2000, and because of the significant progress that has been made to date, specifically associated with the single, integrated risk-informed decommissioning rule, we plan to continue on the path outlined in the Staff Requirements Memorandum dated December 21, 1999. The NRC staff considers the current plan to be efficient and timely. If a plan similar to the one you proposed is eventually adopted, the NRC staff believes that all progress previously made would not have been wasted, since that same effort would likely be needed in any new plan.

The success of the effort to improve power reactor decommissioning regulations is due in part to the input received from stakeholders. Although the NRC staff plans to continue on the path outlined by the Commission, your input will certainly be considered while we continue with the single, integrated risk-informed decommissioning rule and the decommissioning regulatory improvements initiative.

R.E. Beedle

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. The NRC staff contact is Mr. David Wrona, who can be reached at (301) 415-1924, or djw1@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

John A. Zwolinski, Director
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Project No. 689

cc: See next page

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Sincerely,

/RA/

John A. Zwolinski, Director
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