

January 11, 2001

George E. Apostolakis, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: ACRS LETTER DATED DECEMBER 14, 2000, "NUCLEAR ENERGY
INSTITUTE DRAFT REPORT, NEI-99-03, 'CONTROL ROOM HABITABILITY
ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE'"

Dear Dr. Apostolakis:

The subject letter discussed the staff's interaction with Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) to achieve resolution of issues related to control room habitability at nuclear power plants. We agree with the view that the resulting technical document, NEI-99-03, contains useful guidance for utilities in resolving this issue, although we plan to continue working with NEI to further refine it. We also agree with the conclusion that the staff should continue its development of regulatory guidance.

The recommendations and observations in the letter touch on several important open issues in this area, including the frequency and method of testing, the basis for establishing test frequency, the proper level of regulatory control of inleakage, consideration of radiation doses from design-basis accidents at adjacent units, and guidance for addressing smoke generated outside the control room.

The new regulatory guide is currently under development. We expect to publish it for public comment in the Summer of 2001. As we noted in our presentation to the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) on December 7, 2000, the positions espoused by the staff are preliminary, and may evolve as the regulatory guidance goes through NRC management review. The ACRS's recommendations will be given careful consideration in the preparation of the guidance and in our resolution of public comments.

The ACRS has been involved in this effort from its early stages, and has provided significant input to the resolution of this issue. We will continue to solicit the opinions of the ACRS as this work progresses.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

cc: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
SECY

Dr. George E. Apostolakis, Chairman
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