

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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27TH ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

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COMMENTS BY MARK SATORIOUS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS

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TUESDAY

MARCH 10, 2015

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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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The Opening Session of the Regulatory Information Conference began at 8:30 a.m. at the Bethesda Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. DEAN: Next I have the pleasure of
3 introducing the Executive Director for Operations,
4 Mark Satorius. Prior to assuming this position in
5 August 2013, he was the Director of the Office of
6 Federal and State Materials and Environmental
7 Management Programs from 2011 to 2013. And Regional
8 Administrator in the NRC's Region III office in Lisle,
9 Illinois from 2009 to 2011.

10 Since joining the NRC in 1989 as an
11 operating licensing examiner in Region IV, he has held
12 several other leadership positions in both NRC
13 headquarters and the Regions, including Deputy
14 Director of the Office of Enforcement, Division
15 Director for both reactor projects and material safety
16 programs in Regions III and IV, and Deputy Regional
17 Administrator in Region III.

18 Prior to joining the NRC, Mark was an
19 officer in the U.S. Navy's nuclear propulsion program.
20 He managed his family's 1,500 acre farming operation,
21 which when you get him alone he can tell you some good
22 stories about that. And worked as a Chief Operating
23 Officer of a startup retail company.

24 Please welcome my good friend and esteemed
25 colleague, Mark Satorius.

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1 (Applause)

2 MR. SATORIUS: Well, thanks for that
3 introduction Bill. I appreciate it. And yes, I do
4 have a few agricultural stories that if you get me in
5 the back you might be able to learn something about
6 animal husbandry.

7 (Laughter)

8 MR. SATORIUS: So good morning and on
9 behalf of the NRC staff, I'm pleased to add my welcome
10 to this year's conference. My thanks to the Office of
11 Nuclear Reactor Regulation and Nuclear Regulatory
12 Research for the work that they've done in putting this
13 conference together. And I'd also like to point out
14 and thank the many, many NRC volunteers who have
15 contributed in the past and will continue to contribute
16 for this conference and its success.

17 Every year the NRC's Regulatory
18 Information Conference roughly coincides with the
19 Fukushima accident on March 11, 2011. And I feel
20 somewhat compelled to reflect on the NRC's continuing
21 mandate to maintain a strong focus on ensuring the
22 safety and security of the activities that we regulate.
23 An anniversary such as this reinforces the importance
24 of our shared responsibility to remain vigilant in
25 ensuring safe and secure use of radioactive materials.

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1 Today I want to give you a brief state of
2 the Agency from the staff's perspective. What we've
3 accomplished and some of the key issues we're currently
4 focusing on. I want to take this opportunity in this
5 40th anniversary year of the NRC to reflect about our
6 past and the insights it yields for the present and the
7 future.

8 Finally I want to give you some background
9 on the status of Project Aim 2020. You're going to hear
10 a lot about that in the next several years. It's an
11 effort that we initiated last year to improve our
12 efficiency and agility while maintaining our
13 regulatory effectiveness.

14 So let's talk about a few of our
15 accomplishments. In the past year or so, with the
16 cooperation and input of NRC's regulated community, we
17 have had a number of successful accomplishments. As
18 I noted last year, and am pleased to be able to repeat
19 this year, the most significant is the accomplishment
20 of assuring the continued safe and secure operations
21 of commercial nuclear power plants and the possession
22 and use of radioactive materials by our materials
23 licensees.

24 Among our other accomplishments, we've
25 conducted over 150 thousand hours of direct inspection

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1 on baseline, plant specific and generic safety issues
2 that are the foundation of our oversight for nuclear
3 power plants. We've completed over 1,000 licensing
4 actions and other licensing tasks, including approving
5 additional transition to the use of NFPA 805
6 performance-based standards for fire protection, while
7 also actively reviewing a number of nuclear power plant
8 license renewal applications.

9 We've made significant progress on
10 implementing Fukushima lessons learned, including
11 issuing interim staff evaluations of licensee plans to
12 achieve compliance with the mitigating strategies and
13 spent fuel pool instrumentation orders. And auditing
14 licensees' implementation of those safety
15 improvements.

16 We've issued the design certification for
17 the economic simplified boiling water reactor,
18 conducted the mandatory hearings and the combined
19 license application for a new reactor at Fermi. And
20 continued oversight of construction at new reactor
21 construction sites.

22 We've completed the safety evaluation
23 report for the proposed geologic repository at Yucca
24 Mountain. We've completed the merger of the Office of
25 Federal and State Materials and Environmental

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1 Management Programs and the Office of Nuclear Materials
2 and Safety and Safeguards into a single office to
3 improve effectiveness and efficiency.

4 We've published the final rule and the
5 supporting generic environmental impact statement on
6 the continued storage of spent nuclear fuel. We've
7 issued new operating licenses to uranium recovery
8 facilities. We've completed the third, four year
9 report of the Radiation Source Protection and Security
10 Task Force outlining the federal government's efforts
11 over the past four years to enhance the security of
12 nuclear radioactive sources.

13 We've conducted regular communications
14 with our numerous stakeholders including more than
15 1,000 public meetings that were performed in the last
16 year. We've developed and updated Agency strategic
17 plan covering fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018
18 that describes how the NRC plans to achieve its two
19 strategic goals. One to ensure the safe use of
20 radioactive materials and two to ensure the secure use
21 of radioactive materials.

22 On the corporate side, we also undertook
23 a number of significant activities that are critical
24 to accomplishing the Agency's safety and security
25 responsibilities. These include developing a long

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1 term housing strategy for the Agency and major IT
2 infrastructure work including bandwidth expansion to
3 support the work of our resident inspectors. We also
4 progressed with the centralization of corporate
5 functions as part of the transitioning assets to
6 business solutions initiative.

7 The President's fiscal year 2016 budget
8 was submitted to the Congress last month. It continues
9 a trend of relatively flat funding for the NRC with
10 minor reductions in both total dollars and staffing.
11 For fiscal year 2015 our enacted budget of slightly over
12 \$1 billion, when adjusted for inflation, means our
13 resources are about the same place that they were in
14 2006.

15 On the human capital front, we began fiscal
16 year 2015 with just over 3,700 authorized staff. This
17 is about the same as we had started at the beginning
18 of fiscal year '14. And as I'll discuss a little bit
19 later more, we can see this number dropping in the years
20 ahead. But we still need to continue to hire new staff
21 to fill critical positions, ensuring a strong and
22 diverse pipeline and maintaining the skill sets we need
23 to fulfil the mission.

24 We also continue to have a broad range of
25 actions underway on a number of significant issues.

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1 Let me give you a few highlights. Implementation of
2 the Near Term Task Force recommendations from the
3 accident at Fukushima, remains a key focus area for the
4 Agency.

5 In response to the NRC's Mitigating
6 Strategies Order, reactor licensees are putting into
7 place the strategies outlined in the plans they have
8 submitted, and the NRC is actively reviewing their
9 progress.

10 The results have been real improvements in
11 safety at nuclear power plants. We are auditing plants
12 to confirm closeouts of open items and ensuring on time
13 completion by the end of 2016 for most plants.

14 We've also made good progress in reviewing
15 overall integrated plans for phase one of our Order that
16 requires the installation of severe accident capable,
17 hardened wet well vents for boiling water reactors with
18 Mark I and II containments. We're on track to issue
19 interim staff evaluations for these plants ahead of
20 time. And we expect to have all issued by mid-2015.

21 Staff has also conducted multiple public
22 meetings to develop guidance for phase two of the Order,
23 which requires either installation of a severe accident
24 capable hardened dry well vent, or a strategy that makes
25 it unlikely that a dry well vent would be needed during

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1 a severe accident. And staff is on track to issue that
2 guidance by the end of April of this year.

3 The NRC and licensees are also heavily
4 involved with the reevaluation of flooding and seismic
5 hazards. For flooding the industry is actively
6 working towards completing these complex assessments
7 and the NRC is reviewing the results.

8 Staff is also implementing its plan for
9 reviewing the seismic evaluations from the central and
10 eastern U.S. licensees. And expects to receive
11 submittals for the three western sites later this
12 spring.

13 Post Fukushima rule making activities also
14 will continue throughout the year. Last year NRC
15 combined the station blackout mitigation strategies,
16 onsite emergency response capabilities and numerous
17 emergency preparedness rule making activities into one
18 rule making.

19 The staff plans to provide the proposed
20 rule to the Commission by the end of April. The NRC
21 also is considering revising its regulations to include
22 strategies for filtering or otherwise confining
23 radioactive materials that would be released in the
24 event of a severe accident.

25 Regarding our oversight of new reactor

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1 construction, activities at the AP 1000 plants at
2 Vogtle and Summer are now approaching three years under
3 their combined licenses. The construction at both
4 sites is currently concentrating in three areas.

5 One, work on the nuclear island and the
6 outfitting of the auxiliary building. Two, structural
7 module fabrication assembly and placement. And three,
8 primary containment vessel fabrication and assembly.
9 Construction residents and Region based inspections
10 continue to be focused in these areas with emphasis on
11 inspections, tests, analysis and acceptance criteria
12 or ITAAC requirements.

13 Both licensees continue to work through
14 quality and construction challenges. Specifically
15 for structural modules and the AP 1000 shield building.
16 The Agency's oversight from a licensing and inspection
17 perspective continues to focus on ensuring that issues
18 are addressed and resolved, and that these significant
19 structures comply with their licensing basis.

20 International activities continue to be an
21 important area of focus for the Agency. In 2014 the
22 Commission completed and issued the International
23 Policy Statement. This policy statement makes clear
24 the Commission's view that international activities
25 are important to accomplishing the Agency's mission.

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1 Another important accomplishment is the
2 Commission's recent approval of the five-year
3 international strategy for the Agency. In developing
4 the strategy, the staff evaluated the external global
5 environmental and identified the trends that are likely
6 to arise over the next five years and how they will
7 create opportunities and challenges for the NRC.

8 Among the wide ranging activities and
9 support of the Agency's reactor program, the Office of
10 Research is performing a Level Three probabilistic risk
11 assessment or PRA project for Vogtle units one and two.
12 This PRA will provide insights we expect to further
13 enhance regulatory policy and decision making and to
14 help focus limited Agency resources on issues most
15 directly related to the Agency's mission.

16 The project is currently scheduled to be
17 completed in mid-2017. This is only one of the many
18 research projects that support our regulatory programs
19 that we have underway.

20 One final area of ongoing activity that I
21 want to mention is cyber security. We continue to work
22 hard both on our own and with our federal partners to
23 address this important issue. The NRC Chairman leads
24 the voluntary Cyber Security Forum for independent and
25 executive branch regulatory agencies, which oversees

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1 U.S. critical infrastructure and NRC staff plays a
2 leading role in supporting this forum.

3 The NRC is following its cyber security
4 roadmap to comprehensively address cyber security and
5 those requirements for all of our various licensees.
6 Leading the way in this area is the nuclear power
7 reactors, where we are inspecting the first phase of
8 cyber security implementation which provides
9 protection and addresses the most significant cyber
10 attack vectors.

11 Licensees continue to work towards full
12 implementation of their cyber security areas. And the
13 NRC is developing additional guidance to reduce burden
14 and enable licensees to focus efforts using a
15 consequence based approach.

16 In spite of our full plate, the NRC did
17 pause briefly in January to acknowledge and celebrate
18 our 40th anniversary as an agency that began its safety
19 and security mission in 1975. Staff had the
20 opportunity to obtain insights from and hear the
21 remembrances of Marcus Rowden, one of our original
22 Commissioners and our second Chairman.

23 And on a personal note, 1975 was the year
24 I graduated from the Naval Academy and began my naval
25 service by reporting to the Navy Nuclear Power Program

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1 in Orlando, Florida. Little did I know that 40 years
2 later I would stand before you as the Executive Director
3 of Operations for the NRC.

4 The Agency's history is one of both
5 continuity and change. There have been important --
6 there has been important continuity since that first
7 Commission took office. For example, listed on this
8 slide are the objectives the Commission established for
9 its first year in operation.

10 They have withstood the test of time and
11 continued to remain relevant today. Improving
12 regulatory effectiveness and efficiency, greater
13 predictability, shorter review times, greater cross
14 government coordination and addressing important
15 unresolved policy issues. These basic objectives
16 guided our first Commission and they continue to guide
17 us today.

18 At the same time, a lot has changed since
19 1975. And we've had to change to ensure continuing
20 effective and efficient implementation of our mission.
21 We have been confronted with many challenges including
22 the accidents at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and
23 Fukushima, that led us to reexamine our requirements
24 and processes.

25 We also have had times of external economic

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1 and political challenges which have caused the Agency
2 to look inward and reevaluate its processes and
3 programs, resulting in reinvention and change.
4 Another time to reflect on the need for reinvention and
5 change now appears to be upon us.

6 Developments over the past couple of years
7 have converged in early 2014 and have prompted us to
8 seriously reexamine our path forward. For example,
9 there is greater competition in the energy markets. A
10 lower demand for nuclear capacity and the early
11 decommissioning of a number of additional facilities.

12 We and all of you, have devoted
13 considerable resources in implementing the
14 recommendations of the Fukushima Near Term Task Force,
15 which has required us to reprioritize some of our work
16 and has resulted in a reactor licensing backlog.
17 Interest in new large light water reactor construction
18 has waned.

19 We were required by the courts to revisit
20 the Agency's waste confidence decision, now continued
21 storage, regarding the extended storage of waste onsite
22 nuclear power plants. We had to regroup and restart
23 our Yucca Mountain licensing activities. The Agency
24 went through its first governmental shutdown.

25 Finally, both the Agency and our licensees

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1 find themselves working in physically constrained
2 environments. All of these things are going to require
3 us to be increasingly efficient and agile in order to
4 effectively carry out our safety and security missions.

5 Last year during my RIC remarks, I spoke
6 about some ongoing efforts by my leadership team and
7 myself that we were pursuing that would be the
8 beginnings of what we now refer to as Project Aim 2020.
9 This effort with collaboration between my office the
10 Office of the Chief Financial Officer, sought to
11 enhance our ability to plan and execute the Agency's
12 mission more efficiently while adapting to a dynamic
13 environment.

14 Beginning in 2014 a small group of
15 experienced staff began work under the direction of the
16 Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Mike Weber
17 and the advice of a guiding coalition of leaders across
18 the Agency. The team collected significant outreach
19 to external stakeholders and other governmental
20 agencies and reviewed relevant literature and NRC's
21 past experience with these such initiatives.

22 Senior leaders and employees participated
23 in structured interviews and focus groups. Mike and
24 his team developed alternative scenarios for the
25 Agency's future to inform a gap analysis comparing the

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1 current state of the Agency and the challenges and the
2 trends the Agency may face as we move towards 2020.

3 The gap analysis yielded more than 2,000
4 recommendations, suggestions, strategies and
5 observations. Ultimately, we distilled the number of
6 recommendations to a critical few by considering the
7 relevance, the mission value, feasibility, complexity,
8 program risk and timing.

9 With substantial input from Agency senior
10 leaders, the team developed a final set of strategies
11 and a roadmap grouped into three areas. People,
12 planning and process, which we recommended to the
13 Commission at the end of this January.

14 The recommendations will seek to address
15 a number of high level goals. First, right sizing the
16 Agency. The NRC must retain, attract and develop a
17 diverse group of people with the right skills to
18 accomplish our mission efficiently and effectively.

19 Streamlining. Agency processes must be
20 leaner, use resources more wisely and limit overhead
21 in both mission and support functions. Timeliness.
22 The NRC must execute its regulatory functions and make
23 decisions in a more timely manner. When external
24 conditions change, the NRC must respond promptly in a
25 flexible manner.

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1 And finally, unity. The NRC must
2 establish clearer Agency wide priorities that reflect
3 the needs of the nation and work together with unity
4 of purpose in fulfilling those needs. And as you've
5 heard the Chairman mention, the Project Aim report is
6 now with the Commission for their consideration.

7 Once we receive Commission direction, we
8 anticipate implementing a number of strategies that
9 will make us more effective, efficient and an agile
10 regulator. And we expect to revisit our situation on
11 an annual basis to refine and redirect our strategies
12 as necessary with a fresh look at our future five years
13 down the road.

14 So this is not going to be a one shot at
15 Aim Point 2020. In the fall of this year we will look
16 and inform ourselves based on what we know now and where
17 are we going to be in five years in 2021 and the
18 following fall, 2022. So that we will move the Agency
19 in the manner that will have us right sized with the
20 right resources to perform our mission.

21 I look forward to being able to soon share
22 our initial implementation plans with you after we
23 receive direction from the Commission. And on this
24 slide is the link that you can go ahead and take a look
25 at what we had sent to the Commission. And that's in

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1 the Agency document access. It's ADAMS and there's the
2 ML number.

3 So as I wrap this up, we continue to work
4 and live in dynamic times for regulatory agencies, the
5 economy, the energy industry, the American people and
6 the world. And it seems this dynamic environment is
7 quickly becoming the new norm. Although our
8 environment is fluid, our goals remain the same as we
9 continue to strive through Project Aim and other
10 efforts to become an even more efficient and effective
11 nuclear regulator.

12 We will continue to focus on the mission.
13 Seek to maintain our status as a premier nuclear
14 regulator. Adapt to a changing environment. And
15 remain responsive to Commission direction.

16 I look forward to continuing to work
17 together with all of you. And I would be pleased to
18 take your questions at this time.

19 (Applause)

20 MR. SATORIUS: Actually Bill, I was going
21 to take one of the questions that the Chairman got and
22 add something to it.

23 MR. DEAN: Sure. We have time for maybe
24 just one or two questions.

25 MR. SATORIUS: Is that right?

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1 MR. DEAN: Yes.

2 MR. SATORIUS: Oh. Well.

3 MR. DEAN: Why don't you take that one?

4 MR. SATORIUS: Okay. This one I'll do
5 first. The question was, for public meetings that are
6 sometimes difficult, where stakeholders probably do
7 not exhibit the type of deportment we would want them
8 to exhibit, I will just mention that in addition to what
9 the Chairman has laid out, we were tasked by former
10 Chairman Macfarlane last summer to put together a
11 review group to see how we could improve public
12 meetings. Both their -- how we get feedback from our
13 stakeholders and also to look at other ways to make
14 those improve.

15 And one of the areas that -- and that report
16 is completed. And I will be sending it on up to the
17 Chairman probably in a week or two. That report also
18 has in it some areas where how we deal with the more
19 challenging public meetings that we have with, and deal
20 fairly with all of our stakeholders. So, okay.

21 MR. DEAN: Okay. Thanks Mark. So let me
22 ask you this one question and then we'll have to cut
23 you off. What are your views on how the approach for
24 nuclear safety taken by different countries has changed
25 over time? And have the approaches to safety converged

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1 or diverged?

2 MR. SATORIUS: Is that -- the diverge, in
3 other words, our safety focus and international safety
4 focus?

5 MR. DEAN: Correct. In terms of what you
6 see collectively in terms of internationally and the
7 U.S. Have our approaches sort of converged along the
8 same lines or are we taking different paths towards
9 achieving safety goals?

10 MR. SATORIUS: Well each nation has put
11 together a system that suits their culture and where
12 they are within their program. If they're a small
13 program, if they're a large program.

14 I think from my own perspective, working
15 with other nations, I led the IRRS this year to France.
16 And two of the individuals that I worked with very
17 closely are sitting right here in front.

18 I think I took away from that experience,
19 and one of the things that the IRRS missions do is that
20 you leave with an appreciation for how others have their
21 focus on safety. And you bring those back to our
22 regulatory body and they can inform. And that sharing
23 of information back and forth will make I think, us
24 stronger.

25 So I think that as we continue to focus

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1 Bill, on supporting other nations in both IAEA missions
2 and other missions, we bring back our own regulators
3 that are more informed internationally and have
4 different perspectives. And having different
5 perspectives adds to that diversity of experience.

6 MR. DEAN: Okay. Thank you Mark.

7 (Applause)

8 MR. DEAN: So since we have a captured
9 audience here, I'd like to introduce an important video
10 that was developed by several members of the NRC Senior
11 Executive Service Candidate Development Program in
12 2015 with assistance from our Office of Public Affairs
13 and the Agency's audio/visual staff. It is titled NRC
14 and Your Community. And I talked about this earlier
15 in my opening remarks.

16 The vision for this video is to raise
17 awareness of the NRC's positive contribution to society
18 through its role of regulating nuclear facilities and
19 materials in communities throughout the nation. In
20 our world of instantaneous communication, Twitter and
21 Facebook, our ability to connect with those we service,
22 the American people, is becoming more important than
23 ever.

24 Recognizing this reality, the video is
25 designed to build upon the Agency's existing

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1 communications and provide a new perspective on the
2 NRC's service in communities. The positive
3 contributions to society that result from this service
4 and the NRC's responsiveness to public feedback. So
5 please enjoy the video.

6 (Video played)

7 (Applause)

8 MR. DEAN: Thank you for your attention
9 and participation this morning. I'll see you back here
10 promptly at 10:30 for the plenary sessions with
11 Commissioners Svinicki and Ostendorff. Thank you.

12 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
13 went off the record at 10:05 a.m.)

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