

February 19, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO: William D. Travers  
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Annette L. Vietti-Cook, Secretary /s/

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - COMSECY-98-036 - DRAFT NRC CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2000 ISSUE IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY

The Commission approved the staff's proposal to make the draft NRC contingency plan for the Year 2000 issue available for public comment. The staff was informed of this decision on December 7, 1998 so they could proceed with public release.

Staff should develop and run tabletop exercises and drills modeling potential Y2K scenarios, to evaluate NRC response capability and contingency plans in the event of various severities of communications and power failures. The adequacy of administrative and emergency response guidelines should be evaluated under multiple expected events and enforcement discretion challenges. Resident, regional and headquarters staffs should provide an integrated response under various telecommunications and power failure modes. If practicable, staff should consider coordinating drills with licensees who plan to model Y2K challenges.

As recommended by the General Counsel, the Commission acknowledges that the use of enforcement discretion may be preferable to the use of 50.54(x) in allowing licensees to deviate from license conditions or technical specifications arising from Year 2000 complications that would otherwise require plant shutdown. The staff should obtain stakeholder input on this key issue and forward a recommendation to the Commission for review and approval as part of the package accompanying the final contingency plan. Shortly thereafter, the staff should brief the Commissioner Assistants on the scope and detailed guidance to be used in Y2K contingencies.

(EDO)

(SECY Suspense: 5/21/99)

The Commission approved the staff's recommendations in SECY-98-194 (Upgrading the NRC Operations Center Emergency Telecommunications System), including the staff recommendation to purchase mobile satellite systems for all of the nuclear power plant sites within the next 2-3 years. The staff should expedite the purchase and installation of mobile satellite units at each nuclear power plant site to have this system operational prior to December 31, 1999.

v

cc: Chairman Jackson  
Commissioner Dicus  
Commissioner Diaz  
Commissioner McGaffigan  
Commissioner Merrifield  
OGC  
CIO  
CFO  
OCA  
OIG