

March 15, 2011

MEMORANDUM TO: R. W. Borchardt  
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Annette L. Vietti-Cook, Secretary **/RA/**

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS – COMGEA-11-0001 – UTILIZATION  
OF EXPERT JUDGMENT IN REGULATORY DECISION MAKING

The staff should provide to the Commission, within 6 months, a plan for the development of guidance that will ensure that the formal utilization of expert judgment is applied consistently in regulatory decision making throughout the Agency. This plan should describe the staff's approach, schedule, and estimated resources. This plan should recognize that the development of the guidance should include the following:

- i. a summary of past and ongoing significant NRC activities that utilized expert judgment to identify the lessons-learned, document the approaches<sup>1</sup>, and identify significant differences among the approaches,
- ii. a survey of recent research to identify promising new approaches (or techniques that can be applied within the broader approach) to expert judgment that may be appropriate for use in nuclear applications,
- iii. an evaluation of recent activities within other agencies that relied on expert judgment to identify the lessons-learned, document the approaches, and identify differences among the approaches and those used in NRC activities,
- iv. options that match the approach with the nature and significance of the issue and the extent to which expert judgment is relied upon in regulatory decision making,
- v. estimates of resources associated with each option for planning purposes,
- vi. guidance that is prescriptive enough to ensure consistent application of expert judgment within the Agency, yet is sufficiently flexible to account for the wide diversity of issues that the Agency faces. The user should be able to tailor the approach to be applicable to the unique issue of concern, and
- vii. guidance must allow flexibility in application and the use of highly stylized approaches by individual researchers, as long as scrutability is maintained.

(EDO)

(SECY Suspense: 6 months)

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<sup>1</sup> The expert judgment approach refers to the process used to elicit information from experts, analyze this information to develop results, and determine the implications of the results to support regulatory decision making.

cc: Chairman Jaczko  
Commissioner Svinicki  
Commissioner Apostolakis  
Commissioner Magwood  
Commissioner Ostendorff  
OGC  
CFO  
OCA  
OPA  
Office Directors, Regions, ACRS, ASLBP (via E-Mail)  
PDR