

April 12, 2004

COMMISSION VOTING RECORD

DECISION ITEM: SECY-04-0030

TITLE: DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE ROBUST MATERIALS
RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Commission (with Commissioners McGaffigan and Merrifield agreeing and Chairman Diaz disagreeing) approved the subject paper as recorded in the Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM) of April 12, 2004.

This Record contains a summary of voting on this matter together with the individual vote sheets, views and comments of the Commission.

Annette L. Vietti-Cook
Secretary of the Commission

Attachments:

1. Voting Summary
2. Commissioner Vote Sheets

cc: Chairman Diaz
 Commissioner McGaffigan
 Commissioner Merrifield
 OGC
 EDO
 PDR

VOTING SUMMARY - SECY-04-0030

RECORDED VOTES

	APRVD	DISAPRVD	ABSTAIN	NOT PARTICIP	COMMENTS	DATE
CHRM. DIAZ		X			X	3/31/04
COMR. McGAFFIGAN	X				X	4/2/04
COMR. MERRIFIELD	X				X	3/22/04

COMMENT RESOLUTION

In their vote sheets, Commissioners McGaffigan and Merrifield approved the staff's recommendation (option 2, proactive radiation protection research program) and provided some additional comments. Chairman Diaz disapproved the staff's recommendation and provided some additional comments. Chairman Diaz would have preferred option 1, a primarily user needs based research program. Subsequently, the comments of the Commission were incorporated into the guidance to staff as reflected in the SRM issued on April 12, 2004.

Commissioner Comments on SECY-04-0030

Chairman Diaz

I disapprove the staff's recommended Option 2, and I approve Option 1.

The staff should evaluate if there are NMSS activities that more appropriately belong in RES, and provide the Commission with its plan to transfer any identified activities to RES. The staff should continue to employ the user needs process to access research that is needed to support regulatory objectives, using PBPM as a way to prioritize the activities and allocate resources.

Key areas that NMSS should consider for research user needs include the development of better, i.e., more realistic, models to address health effects (either through a realistic model or by establishing an approach that determines a reasonable range of likely consequences), atmospheric dispersion, and source terms.

Commissioner McGaffigan

I approve the staff's recommended Option 2, for the Office of Research to initiate a more pro-active radiation protection research program.

However, I also agree with Chairman Diaz that the staff in both RES and NMSS should determine if there are other activities or projects that can be given to RES and thereby remove some of the burden from NMSS. As I stated last March in the Office of Research Programs, Performance, and Plans Commission meeting, I do not think there is enough emphasis on materials work in RES. The staff should look for activities that NMSS is currently performing that can be moved into RES without losing the ability for NMSS to get things done quickly.

I think Option 2 is a start, and that these activities will benefit future radiation protection activities in NMSS, but the staff should continue to look for more ways to build a more robust materials program in RES.

Commissioner Merrifield

I approve with the following comments the staff's proposed option 2 in SECY-04-0030 for staff to initiate a more pro-active radiation protection research program which would support NRR, NMSS, and NSIR. To reduce costs, this program should be initiated with greater reliance on in-house staff rather than contractors. Strong oversight must be maintained over the program to ensure it focuses on achieving the strategic goals and objectives of the agency and the programmatic needs of the various offices it is designed to support. Specific research projects should be clearly aligned with the NRC goals and strategies for meeting those goals. Resources for specific projects should be addressed through the normal planning, budgeting, and performance management (PBPM) process.

There are three aspects of the staff proposal. The first aspect is to conduct research based on specific user needs from the other program offices. I fully support this effort. The second aspect addresses research needed to support potential changes in recommended international standards associate with radiation. There is considerable international standards development in progress and I can see a need for appropriate research in this area. To a considerable

degree, this research could be directly related to future user needs from other program offices. However, for this international effort, staff and management should (a) focus on the strategic goals of the Commission and (b) limit international travel to the defined needs of the Commission. The third aspect is a proposal by the staff for a more robust forward thinking research program. This aspect gives me some concern. I can certainly understand the need to be conscious of new and better ways to efficiently and effectively conduct our business. At the same time, the NRC should devote the majority of its limited resources to addressing critical needs. I expect very strong management in the PBPM process over this aspect of the proposed research program.