

June 5, 1996

For: The Commissioners  
 From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO  
 Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING MAY 31, 1996

**Contents**

- Nuclear Reactor Regulation
- Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
- Nuclear Regulatory Research
- Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data
- General Counsel
- Administration
- Information Resources Management
- Controller
- Personnel
- Small Business & Civil Rights
- Enforcement
- State Programs
- Public Affairs
- International Programs
- Office of the Secretary
- Region I
- Region II
- Region III
- Region IV
- Executive Director for Operations
- Congressional Affairs

**Enclosure**

- A
- B
- C\*
- D
- E\*
- F
- G\*
- H\*
- I
- J\*
- K\*
- L\*
- M
- N
- O\*
- P
- P\*
- P
- P
- Q\*
- R

\*No input this week

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ENCLOSURE A

Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation  
 Items of Interest  
 Week Ending May 31, 1996

**Maintenance Rule Training for Region III Inspectors**

Wayne Scott and Steve Tingen, of the Quality Assurance and Maintenance Branch, presented the branch's 1-day Maintenance Rule training program in the Region III offices on May 29, 1996. Attendees included Region III resident and region-based inspectors, supervisors and managers and inspectors from other regions. The maintenance rule training program is designed to indoctrinate the staff about Maintenance Rule requirements, inspections and related issues.

**Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1 Steam Generators**

On May 23, 1996, the licensee announced that it is purchasing steam generators from the Seabrook Unit 2 plant. These steam generators will replace the existing Unit 1 steam generators. Startup of Salem Unit 1 with the replacement steam generators is scheduled for the second quarter of 1997.

**Braidwood, Unit 1 Extension of Mid-Cycle SG Inspection**

By letter dated May 22, 1996, the NRC staff agreed to extend the mid-cycle inspection of Unit 1's steam generator (SG) tubes to no later than October 15, 1996. The licensee had planned on conducting an eddy current inspection (ECI) of Unit 1's steam generators to determine whether there are circumferential indications at the top of the tube sheets in the roll transition zone no later than July 1996.

The staff's basis for acceptance of the proposed extension is contained in the May 22, 1996, letter and was based on the results of tube inspections at Byron Unit 1 which has had similar experiences with their SGs.

In addition, the staff's acceptance to extend the mid-cycle inspection is subject to four conditions: (1) the licensee's commitment to plug or sleeve all SG tubes with circumferential indications found in the Braidwood 1 Fall 1996 ECI outage; (2) the licensee's commitment to use ECI methodology equivalent or better than the one used in Byron's Spring 1996 outage; (3) the licensee's commitment to remove selected tubes with circumferential indications and conduct destructive tests during the 1997 Spring refueling outage; and (4) the licensee's commitment to conduct in-situ pressure testing of selected SG tubes during the Fall 1996 mid-cycle inspection.

The staff requested that the licensee respond within five working days from the date of NRC's letter confirming ComEd's acceptance of the four commitments cited above. ComEd accepted the four commitments on May 24, 1996.

## Byron Units 1 and 2 Loss of Offsite Power

At 0804 CDT on May 23, 1996, Unit 1 which has been shutdown for refueling since April 5, 1996, experienced an electrical transient which resulted in a complete loss of offsite power (LOOP). Both emergency diesels (EDGs) started and loaded as designed. The licensee declared an unusual event (UE) due to a LOOP for longer than 15 minutes. Subsequently, the licensee's investigation determined that the LOOP was caused by moisture intrusion into the "B" phase of the Unit 1 station auxiliary transformer bus duct (SAT 142-2). The electrical fault caused an overcurrent situation which resulted in the loss of both SATs (142-1 and 142-2). The UE was terminated at 1430 CDT on May 24, 1996, when the licensee completed decoupling and isolating the damaged transformer (SAT 142-2) and restored all power to Unit 1 through SAT 142-1.

Unit 2 was operating at 100% power when the Unit 1 LOOP occurred. At the time two of the three 100% non-essential service water pumps were powered from Unit 1 busses. The third pump, which normally would be powered by Unit 2 was out of service for maintenance. One of the cooling loads on non-essential service water is the service air compressor, which in turn supplies instrument air. With the loss of instrument air, the operators manually tripped Unit 2 per their procedures. All systems functioned as designed with the exception of source range instrument N-31.

ENCLOSURE B

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

## Meeting with Prairie Island Dakota Indian Tribe

On May 23, 1996, staff from the Spent Fuel Project Office and Region III participated in a roundtable discussion with representatives of the Prairie Island Dakota Indian Tribe at the Prairie Island Dakota Reservation on Prairie Island, Minnesota. The meeting was jointly chaired by the Prairie Island Tribe and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. Other Federal agencies represented included the U.S. Geological Survey, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Also attending were representatives of Minnesota State agencies. While the meeting was primarily to discuss the Prairie Island Tribe's interest in entering into Memoranda of Understanding with the various Federal agencies, a significant portion of the discussion focused on issues associated with the proximity of the reservation to Northern States Power's Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Station and issues associated with locating an off-site Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation in nearby Goodhue County, Minnesota.

## Reportable Geologic Condition at Yucca Mountain: High-Density Fractures at Repository Depth

The Department of Energy (DOE [EXIT](#)) reported an 800 foot-long zone of intense, steeply dipping fractures in the Exploratory Shaft Facility tunnel at the level of the candidate repository. The occurrence of the fracture zone was not anticipated because no surface geologic mapping surveys in the area had detected fractures of such density and northwesterly trend. The DOE considers that the previously undetected fractures may increase permeability of strata previously thought to be relatively impermeable. The fractures reportedly appear to be tectonic and their N 45-70 W bearing and mechanical interaction with joints of different origin can provide new data on tectonic models of the site. The U.S. Geological Survey is continuing to investigate the unexpected condition and its potential significance to hydrologic and tectonic characterization of the site. The Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards' On-site Representative continues to keep Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff informed of these developments.

## Site Visit to Plateau Resources Limited's Shootaring Canyon Uranium Mill Site

On May 16, 1996, staff from the Uranium Recovery Branch, Division of Waste Management, visited Plateau Resources Limited's (PRL) Shootaring Canyon Uranium Mill site, located in Garfield County, Utah. PRL has requested a renewal of its current Nuclear Regulatory Commission source material license to allow for the resumption of operations at the Shootaring Canyon Uranium Mill which has been on standby status since 1982. The purpose of the visit was to provide NRC technical staff with a site orientation in preparation for the detailed review of PRL's renewal application, specifically, the detailed site reclamation plan. In this regard, the NRC staff agreed to provide PRL with the current staff guidance concerning reclamation of uranium mill tailings impoundments.

## Visits to Kennecott Sweetwater Uranium Mill Site and Colorado Title I Sites

On May 21, 1996, staff from the Division of Waste Management (DWM) visited the Sweetwater Uranium Mill site and environs near Rawlins, Wyoming. The purpose of the visit was to review evidence of faulting in the site area. The staff was accompanied at the site by representatives of the Sweetwater Mill and its consultant, Shepherd Miller, Inc., and representatives of the Wyoming Geological Survey (WYGS). WYGS staff presented the results of geologic field studies in the site area, including evidence of recent faulting, and provided recommendations regarding the seismic hazard at the site. Staff viewed recent faults mapped by the WYGS on aerial photographs and in the field. The site visit and review of the WYGS field evidence provided information that will assist the staff in its review of open issues related to seismic hazards and design of tailings impoundments at the site.

On May 22-23, 1996, DWM staff also visited the Department of Energy (DOE) Title I Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) sites at Maybell, Naturita, and Slick Rock, Colorado. At the Maybell site staff sampled and evaluated the rock to be used for stabilization of the tailings and examined off-site areas adjacent to the site that were sampled for contamination. Staff visited the Naturita disposal site, located at Uravan, Colorado, where the disposal cell is being prepared to accept residual radioactive material from the Naturita Processing site. Staff also examined areas adjacent to the Naturita Processing site where DOE proposes to apply supplemental standards. At Slick Rock, staff observed clean-up activities at the two UMTRA processing sites and progress on the completion of the disposal cell. The staff was accompanied by a representatives of the DOE contractor, MK Ferguson Company, and a representative of the Colorado Department of Health at the Naturita and Slick Rock sites.

## NRC/DOE Technical Exchange on the Results of the NRC Audit Review of DOE's Total System Performance Assessment-1995

On May 22-23, 1996, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy (DOE) conducted a technical exchange to discuss the results of the recently completed NRC staff audit review of DOE's Total System Performance Assessment-1995 (TSPA '95) for a proposed repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Representatives from the State of Nevada and affected units of local government, U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board staff, Electric Power Research Institute staff, Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste staff, DOE program participants, and Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses staff also attended the technical exchange. At this technical exchange, the NRC and DOE staff introduced a new meeting format which included the following

elements: formal presentations in which questions were raised; "break-out" sessions in which smaller working groups discussed specific questions and technical issues; and a closing summary session in which the results of the break-out sessions were reported.

The NRC audit review, using the key technical issue team concept, focused on the technical areas considered important to repository performance: repository temperature and relative humidity; waste package container life and source term; ground water infiltration and deep percolation; and radionuclide dilution. The NRC staff also commented on the relationship between DOE's TSPA '95 and the evolving Waste Containment and Isolation Strategy. As a result of the technical exchange, it was agreed that the staffs might benefit from more focused interactions in the future. The NRC staff noted that it would formally transmit the results of its audit review to DOE later this summer.

#### **IAEA Board of Governors Preparatory Meeting**

On May 21, 1996, staff from the Regulatory and International Safeguards Branch attended a Department of State (DOS) meeting to discuss the results of meetings held the week of May 20, 1996, in Vienna, Austria, to prepare for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) June Board of Governors meeting. The issues discussed at the DOS meeting included the status of efforts to incorporate measures for detecting undeclared facilities into the IAEA safeguards approach and the concept of universality, wherein nuclear weapons states carry a safeguards burden similar to non-nuclear weapon states.

#### **Meeting with Nuclear Fuel Services**

On May 29, 1996, staff from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards met with Region II staff in Atlanta to participate in a presentation by Nuclear Fuel Services (NFS), Inc., Erwin, Tennessee. The NFS presentation concerned: the NFS evaluation of and response to the April 2, 1996, incinerator fire event at the NFS facility; the status of NFS' review and preparation for a new process activity involving high enriched uranium; and a summary of NFS' current new business initiatives and expectations for the near future.

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ENCLOSURE D

Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

#### **Tours of NRC Operations Center**

On May 23, 1996 a member of the Emergency Response Branch presented a tour and briefing on the NRC Operations Center to Mr. Peter Vrabcek of the Slovak Nuclear Safety Authority (SNSA). Mr. Vrabcek is on a two-week training assignment at NRC Headquarters. On Friday, May 24, 1996, three executives from Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry toured the Operations Center. The visitors were Akira Sanada, Masaomi Ikeda, and Tomoaki Shira.

On May 28, 1996, members of ERB conducted a briefing and tour of the Operations Center for four Congressional Staff members and representatives from the Office of Congressional Affairs. Three Congressional staff members were from Senator Cohen's staff from Maine. The other staff member was from Senator Faircloth's staff. The staff members will be participating as players with the NRC in the Main Yankee exercise on June 19, 1996.

#### **Staff Presentation**

On May 22, 1996, an ERB staff make a presentation on Protective Action Decision-Making to a group of Lithuanian emergency response personnel who were attending a DOE briefing on Emergency Response in Las Vegas, NV.

#### **Training in Region IV**

On May 29 and 30, 1996, two ERB staff members provided training for staff and management in Region IV on AEOD emergency response programs including the new FRERP and RTM overview and the new Incident Response Management Directive.

#### **Response to Point Beach Gas Detonation Event**

On May 28 and 29, 1996, members of the Emergency Response Branch participated in NRC's response to an event at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant involving the detonation of a combustible gas during spent fuel transfer to a dry-storage cask. Although the licensee did not classify the event as an emergency, staff members from NMSS, NRR and AEOD provided technical support and event monitoring assistance to Region III from the Operations Center until the affected fuel assemblies were safely returned to the spent fuel pool.

#### **Preliminary Notifications**

1. PNO-II-96-039, Tennessee Valley Authority (Browns Ferry 1 2 3), BROWNS FERRY COOLING TOWER FIRE
2. PNO-II-96-040, Duke Power Co. (McGuire 2), EXTENDED SHUTDOWN FOLLOWING REACTOR TRIP
3. PNO-II-06-041, Georgia Power Co. (Vogtle 1), SHUTDOWN DUE TO DETECTION OF FOREIGN OBJECT IN STEAM GENERATOR
4. PNO-III-96-031, Commonwealth Edison Co. (Byron 1 2), UNIT 2 TRIPPED MANUALLY AFTER UNIT 1 TRANSFORMER FAILURE
5. PNO-III-96-032, Commonwealth Edison Co. (Dresden 3), AUGMENTED INSPECTION TEAM TO REVIEW UNIT 3 REACTOR SCRAM (UPDATE)
6. PNO-III-96-033, Wisconsin Electric Power Co (Point Beach 1 2), UNIDENTIFIED GAS IGNITED DURING SPENT FUEL CASK WELDING
7. PNO-III-96-033A, Wisconsin Electric Power Co. (Point Beach 1 2), UNIDENTIFIED GAS IGNITED DURING SPENT FUEL CASK WELDING
8. PNO-III-96-033B, Wisconsin Electric Power Co. (Point Beach 1 2), UNIDENTIFIED GAS IGNITED DURING SPENT FUEL CASK WELDING

- 9. PNO-IV-96-027A, Entergy Operations, Inc. (Arkansas Nuclear 1), COMPLETING OF AIT INSPECTION
- 10. PNO-IV-96-028, California Agreement State, GAUGES STOLEN FROM TEMPORARY JOBSITE

ENCLOSURE F

Office of Administration  
 Items of Interest  
 Week Ending May 31, 1996

**Protecting the Identity of Allegers and Confidential Sources; Policy Statement**

An update of the Commission's policy statement concerning protecting the identity of an individual who has been granted confidentiality was published in the Federal Register on May 23, 1996 (61 FR 25924). The revised policy statement reflects changes in NRC's organization and in the agency's practices concerning confidentiality, including informing individuals of the availability of confidentiality, circumstances under which confidentiality will be granted, and circumstances under which the identity of confidential resources will be revealed. The policy statement became effective May 23, 1996.

**Reasserting NRC's Authority for Approving Onsite Low-Level Waste Disposal in Agreement States; Withdrawal (Part 150)**

A document that withdrew a proposed rule that would have reasserted NRC's jurisdiction in Agreement States over the disposal of licensed material generated and disposed of at reactor sites was published in the Federal Register on May 29, 1996 (61 FR 268521). The proposed rule would also have clarified the jurisdiction over disposal of noncritical waste quantities of special nuclear material at reactors and fuel cycle facilities. Based on comments received, current experience with such waste disposal, and the relatively low hazards associated with this type of action, the NRC has concluded that the proposed action is not necessary.

**Termination of Transfer of Licensed Activities; Recordkeeping Requirements (Parts 20, 30, 40, 61, 70, and 72)**

A final rule that amends regulations applicable to the disposition of certain records when a licensee terminates licensed activities, or licensed activities are transferred to another licensee, was published in the Federal Register on May 16, 1996 (61 FR 24669). The final rule requires a licensee to transfer records pertaining to effective decommissioning and certain records pertaining to offsite releases and waste disposal, to the new licensee if licensed activities will continue at the same site. It also requires the new licensee to forward the same records to the NRC before the license is terminated. The final rule becomes effective June 17, 1996.

**Significant FOIA Requests Received during the 5-Day Period of May 24 - May 30, 1996:**

Request for six categories of documents related to all new hires to OPA since December 1992 (Individual; FOIA-96-217)

Request for four categories of records related to NRC sponsored UF dispersion codes developed by SAIC (Elizabeth Steponkus; Federal Sources, Inc.; FOIA-96-218)

Request for a copy of a memo dated September 16, 1994, related to misconduct by personnel that had been cited in an OIG report (Individual; FOIA-96-219)

Request for records relating to Shoreham Nuclear Power Station (Jonathan Sinnreich; Sinnreich Wasserman Grubin & Cahill, LLP; FOIA-96-220)

Request for all NRC records from 1995 to present related to a named individual of New York Power Authority to include OI case no. 1-95-019 (Amy Levine; New York Power Authority; FOIA-96-221)

Request for records relating to Equifax for the past 20 years (Mark Palen; AEGIS International, Inc.; FOIA-96-222)

Request on behalf of an individual for reports related to an investigation at Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant (David Furness; Walbran, Walbran, Furness & Leuning; FOIA-96-223)

Request for all records related to the acquisition of Seabrook Nuclear Power Station by Northeast Utilities (Mike McIntire; The Hartford Courant; FOIA-96-224)

Request for a copy of NRC Active Contract Award List (Jack Thorpe; Critique, Inc.; FOIA-96-225)

ENCLOSURE I

Office of Personnel  
 Items of Interest  
 Week Ending May 31, 1996

<b>Arrivals</b>		
BOYLE, Brad	SUMMER CLERICAL	IRM
COUGHLIN, Sara	SUMMER ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN	OI/RI
HOLAHAN, Eugene	SR. HEALTH PHYSICIST (PFT)	RES
HSU, Cynthia	SUMMER CLERICAL*	ACRS
LEES, Patrick	SUMMER ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN	IRM
LOGISZ, Daniel	SUMMER CLERICAL	IRM
<b>Retirements</b>		
MCLAUGHLIN, Peter	BRANCH CHIEF (PFT)	OC

<b>Departures</b>
NONE

ENCLOSURE M

Office of Public Affairs  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

**Media Interest**

Government Executive magazine is doing a story on "Leadership in the 90's" and has asked to interview three NRC Presidential Executive Rank and Meritorious Executive Rank award winners. The interviewees will be James Milhoan, Elinor Adensam, and Peter Rabideau.

Region III PAOs fielded calls from Associated Press, Wisconsin Public Radio, Wisconsin State Journal, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, local television and radio stations, trade media, citizen's groups and members of the public on the gas ignition in the Point Beach dry cask storage container.

**Press Releases**

<b>Headquarters:</b>	
96-75	NRC Withdraws Proposed Rule on Agency Authority Over Low-Level Waste at Reactor Sites in Agreement States
96-76	NRC Establishes Independent Safety Assessment Team to Evaluate Maine Yankee Plant
96-77	NRC's Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste to Meet June 25-27
<b>Regions:</b>	
II-96-48	NRC Staff Issues Notices of Violation to Georgia Power Company Following Personnel Discrimination Rulings by Secretary of Labor
III-96-21	NRC Sends Augmented Inspection Team to Review Gaseous Ignition Incident in Spent Fuel Cask at Point Beach Nuclear Plant
IV-96-34	NRC Augmented Inspection Team Continues Work During ANO Unit 1 Restart
IV-96-35	NRC to Meet with Entergy to Discuss Augmented Inspection Team Findings

ENCLOSURE N

Office of International Programs  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

**Low Level Waste Forum Meeting**

On Friday, staff representatives from OIP, NMSS, and OGC presented briefings on two international topics at the meeting of the Low Level Waste Forum in Annapolis, Maryland. An OIP participant covered pending license applications for exports and imports of radioactive waste; NMSS and OGC participants summarized the status of negotiations on a Radioactive Waste Convention.

ENCLOSURE P

Region I  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

**Malden Mills Update**

Two additional gauges were recovered during the week of May 27 from the Malden Mills fire wreckage. During the continuing investigation by the State Fire Marshall into the cause of the December 11, 1995, fire at the Malden Mills Industries (licensee) facility in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the licensee identified radiation levels above background. The licensee followed its procedures, and called in its consultant and the State of Massachusetts. Two gauges containing Cesium-137 were recovered. The licensee believes that these gauges were located in the area of the hottest part of the fire. The lead shielding on the gauges was reconfigured, however much of the shielding remained intact. Malden Mills is storing the gauges in a secured area with additional shielding until they are shipped for disposal. The licensee is hopeful that the remaining four gauges (of the 11 involved in the fire) will be easily recovered because all of the gauges found thus far have been in the expected grid locations.

ENCLOSURE P

Region III  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

**AIT Dispatched to Point Beach Nuclear Power Station**

On May 29, 1996, a six-person Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) was dispatched to Point Beach Nuclear Power Station to review the unexpected burning of a combustible gas during the welding of a lid on a spent fuel storage container the previous day.

The storage cask had been loaded with 24 spent fuel assemblies and moved from the spent fuel storage pool at the plant to an adjacent work area. As technicians began welding the lid on the container, combustible gas inside the container ignited. Pressure from the burning gas moved the lid slightly, leaving it about one-inch out of place. Several shims had been dislodged during the event, falling to the floor of the work area. The cask was filled with water at the time of the incident with a small air space at the top. Air monitors showed there was no release of radioactivity from the container, and there is no evidence of damage to the spent fuel. No one was injured in the incident.

On May 29, 1996, the licensee transferred the spent fuel storage cask from the decontamination work area in the auxiliary building to the spent fuel storage pool. Air and water samples showed detectable levels of hydrogen. On May 30, the licensee unloaded the fuel assemblies and placed them in the storage racks in the pool. A visual examination of the fuel assemblies showed no evidence of damage. Following the unloading of the cask, the cask was moved back to the decontamination work area for further inspection.

One possible source of the hydrogen being considered by the licensee is a zinc-based coating applied to internal surfaces of the cask. The zinc may have reacted chemically with the acidic water from the spent fuel storage pool, producing hydrogen.

All nuclear power plants currently using dry cask spent fuel storage systems have been advised of the incident. The NRC Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards is planning to issue a generic communication to nuclear power plants informing them of the incident and ongoing assessments.

ENCLOSURE P

Region IV  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

**Meeting with the Department of Energy and Lockheed Idaho Technologies Company to Discuss the Proposed ISFSI to TMI-2 Fuel**

Representatives from the Department of Energy and Lockheed Idaho Technologies Company will meet with regional management on May 29th to discuss the proposed construction of an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory for the TMI-2 fuel bearing material. This meeting is open to the public.

**Wolf Creek Visit**

The Regional Administrator and the Deputy Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation visited the Wolf Creek Generating Station on May 30, 1996, to make a plant tour and meet with management representatives of the Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation.

ENCLOSURE R

Office of Congressional Affairs  
Items of Interest  
Week Ending May 31, 1996

**CONGRESSIONAL HEARING SCHEDULE, No. 65**

OCA ASSIGNMENT	DATE & PLACE	TIME	WITNESS	SUBJECT	COMMITTEE
Gerke	06/05/96 2154 RHOB	10:00	TBA	Government Downsizing	Reps. Mica/Moran Civil Service Government Reform & Oversight
Madden	TBA	TBA	Commission	NRC Oversight	Senators Faircloth/Graham Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property and Nuclear Safety Environment and Public Works