

INFORMATION REPORT

November 22, 2004

SECY-04-0218

For: The Commissioners
From: William M. Dean, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
Subject: SECY-04-0218 WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK
ENDING NOVEMBER 12, 2004

Contents

Enclosure

| | |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| Nuclear Reactor Regulation | A |
| Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards | B |
| Nuclear Regulatory Research | C |
| Nuclear Security and Incident Response | D* |
| General Counsel | E* |
| Administration | F |
| Chief Information Officer | G |
| Chief Financial Officer | H* |
| Human Resources | I |
| Small Business and Civil Rights | J* |
| Enforcement | K* |
| State and Tribal Programs | L* |
| Public Affairs | M |
| International Programs | N |
| Office of the Secretary | O |
| Region I | P |
| Region II | P |
| Region III | P* |
| Region IV | P* |
| Executive Director for Operations | Q* |
| Congressional Affairs | R* |

*No input this week.

/RA/

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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

Public Meeting on Electric Grid Reliability

On November 3, 2004, staff members from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) met with representatives of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO), the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC), and several reactor licensees to discuss the ongoing activities regarding electrical grid reliability. The following topics were discussed: (1) binding agreements with reliability coordinator (Independent System Operator) and control area operators, (2) single point accountability for plant activities with the switchyard and grid, (3) plant voltage needs against grid voltage predictions, and (4) plant's ability to respond to loss-of-offsite power conditions including potential complications when non-essential power is lost for an extended time period.

Brunswick - Public Meeting on License Renewal

On November 4, 2004, NRR staff, supported by staff members from Region II, conducted a Category 3 public meeting in Southport, North Carolina regarding a recently submitted license renewal application for the Brunswick nuclear power plant. The staff presented an overview of the NRC's license renewal review process which includes opportunities for public participation. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the meeting.

NRC Information Notice (IN) 2004-19: Problems Associated with Back-up Power Supplies to Emergency Response Facilities and Equipment

On November 4, 2004, the NRC issued the subject IN to alert all operating nuclear power reactor licensees to recent problems with back-up power supplies for emergency response facilities (ERFs) and equipment at several facilities. The IN reminds the addressees of the requirements in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 50, Paragraph 47(b)(8), which specifies that adequate emergency facilities and equipment to support the emergency response are provided and maintained.

Meeting with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

On November 9, 2004, NRR staff attended a meeting held at the NIST facilities in Gaithersburg, Maryland to discuss the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) for certification of calibration laboratories. This meeting provided background for the staff's ongoing evaluation of a licensee's proposal to allow use of the NVLAP accredited calibration laboratories as part of their commercial grade dedication programs.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

Meeting of the Western Interstate Energy Board

On November 4-5, 2004, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) staff attended a meeting of the Western Interstate Energy Board's High-Level Radioactive Waste Committee in Portland, Oregon. The Board, composed of members from 12 western states and three western Canadian provinces, deals with safety and operational issues related to shipment of spent fuel. NMSS staff gave a brief presentation on the recently completed full-scale drop tests in Germany. Other major topics discussed at the meeting include the status of the Department of Energy's shipping program for Yucca Mountain; Section 180(c) funding; routing; and the safety and security of spent fuel shipping casks. In addition, a representative of Private Fuel Storage presented an update on its proposed facility in Skull Valley, Utah. The representatives from Utah and Nevada expressed a strong interest in the Commission's upcoming decision on the future direction of the Package Performance Study.

Participation in the Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America

On November 7-10, 2004, staff members from the Division of High-Level Waste Repository Safety (DHLWRS) and the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (CNWRA) participated in the annual Geological Society of America meeting in Denver, Colorado. Department of Energy consultants on Yucca Mountain project discussed the preliminary results of recent observations of plate tectonic motions and aeromagnetic anomalies associated with potential volcanic features; identification of a known carcinogenic mineral in the tunnel; and evidence of small amounts of water flowing through the Yucca Mountain fractures in the past several million years. The DHLWRS and CNWRA staff members discussed their permeability studies of a natural analog to Yucca Mountain non-welded tuff; its risk-insights of geologic, hydrologic and geological features and processes at Yucca Mountain; and how it will conduct a review of the License Application.

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

OECD-MCCI Program Review Group and Management Board Meetings

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) staff conducted the 6th Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Melt Coolability and Concrete Interaction (MCCI) Program Review Group (PRG) and Management Board (MB) meetings, held at the Argonne National Laboratory on November 3 - 5, 2004. The OECD-MCCI Program is coordinated by NRC with participation by 13 OECD countries and by the U.S. Department of Energy. The outcome of the program is expected to determine the efficacy of severe accident management strategy of flooding the reactor cavity. The 6th PRG/MB meetings focused on the recently completed core-concrete interaction test (CCI-2), second in a series of two tests to generate the two-dimensional concrete erosion data involving reactor core material. The CCI series of tests provides data for modeling core-concrete interaction phenomena and for assessing the limit of debris cooling by an overlying water pool.

RES Management Meeting with Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)

On November 5, 2004, RES management met with EPRI representatives to discuss ongoing and planned cooperative research projects under the Memorandum of Understanding with EPRI. The meeting focused on key research program status, challenges, and milestones. The meeting covered issues related to risk-informed regulation, grid reliability, pressurized-water reactor (PWR) sump performance, PWR materials degradation, advanced reactor designs, fire protection, dry cask storage, digital instrumentation and control, and fuels.

Public Meeting on Draft Regulatory Guide DG-1138, "NRC Staff Regulatory Position on ANS External Hazards P.A. Standard"

On November 9, 2004, staff from the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) and RES held a public meeting to solicit public comments on the staff's proposed position on American Nuclear Society (ANS) standard ANSI/ANS-58.21-2003, "American National Standard - External Events P.A. Methodology," as documented in Draft Regulatory Guide DG-1138. DG-1138, which provides the draft Appendix C to Regulatory Guide 1.200, "An Approach for Determining the Technical Adequacy of Probabilistic Assessment Results for Risk-Informed Activities," was issued for public comment on August 31, 2004. Representatives from ANS, the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Electric Power Research Institute, and Westinghouse participated in the meeting. In general, the meeting attendees agreed with the proposed staff position on the external-events standard and ANS plans, with a few exceptions, to modify the standard to reflect the staff position. Commenters also recommended that the staff consider issuing Appendix C for trial use prior to issuing the document as final. This standard supports ongoing staff efforts associated with the implementation of the phased approach to Probabilistic Risk Assessment quality.

Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-73-12)

On November 8, 2004, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) published a Notice in the Federal Register (69 FR 64690) that announced the receipt of a petition for rulemaking submitted by the Committee To Bridge the Gap. The petitioner requests that the NRC amend its regulations to upgrade the design basis threat (or the magnitude of threat that a facility's security systems must be capable of defeating), and associated requirements for protection of domestic reactors from nuclear terrorism to a level that encompasses, with a sufficient margin of safety, the capabilities evidenced by the attacks of September 11, 2001. The comment period for this action closes on January 24, 2005.

November 12, 2004

ENCLOSURE F

Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Requests Received During the Period of
November 5 through November 11, 2004:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Allegations, RIII-04-A-0052 & RIII-04-A-0113; all communications between NRC & Nuclear Management Co., re: complaint | FOIA/PA-2005-0035 |
| NRC Contract 2600307, statement of work | FOIA/PA-2005-0036 |

November 12, 2004

ENCLOSURE G

Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

| Arrivals | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|------|
| RJ Coleman | Chief, Budget, Policy, and Operations Team, | OCFO |
| Cynthia M. Flannery | Team Leader | NMSS |
| Brian Haagensen | Operations Engineer | R-I |
| Clifford Hall | Security Specialist | NSIR |
| Jorge Hernandez | Reactor Engineer | NRR |
| Harriet Nash | Environmental Scientist | NRR |
| Veronica Rodriguez | Project Manager | NRR |
| Benjamin Sandler | Intelligence Analyst | NSIR |
| Departures | | |
| Elizabeth Bowlin | Auditor | OIG |
| Victoria G. Francis | Investigative Analyst | OIG |
| Janet O'Dell | IT Specialist | R-IV |

November 12, 2004

ENCLOSURE I

Office of Public Affairs
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

Media Interest

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) received significant media inquiries on the following:

A “white” finding regarding Vermont Yankee’s inventory of tone-alert radios for residents of the 10-mile emergency protection zone.

Safety issues at the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear plants in New Jersey.

The NRC’s shutdown of the ADAMS document system for its ongoing security review.

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|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Press Releases | |
| Headquarters: | |
| 04-141 | NRC Seeks Public Comment on Implementation of Reactor Oversight Process (11/8) |
| 04-142 | NRC Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste to Meet Nov. 16-18 in Rockville, Maryland (11/10) |
| Regions: | |
| III-04-049 | NRC to Meet with FirstEnergy on Nuclear Plant Performance (11/9) |

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

JNES President's Visit to the NRC Headquarters

On November 12, 2004, Dr. Hideki Nariai, President of the Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES), visited the NRC offices at headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, and met with Chairman Diaz and the Executive Director for Operations, Mr. Luis Reyes. JNES is a technical support organization for Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA), created in October 2003.

November 12, 2004

ENCLOSURE N

Office of the Secretary
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

| Document Released to Public | Date | Subject |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Decision Documents | | |
| 1. SECY-04-0195 | 10/21/04 | Rulemaking Plan: Clarification of NRC Civil Penalty Authority Over Contractors and Subcontractors Who Discriminate Against Employees for Engaging in Protected Activities (RM #636) |
| 2. SECY-04-0191 | 10/19/04 | Withholding Sensitive Unclassified Information Concerning Nuclear Power Reactors from Public Disclosure |
| SRM on 04-0191 | 11/9/04 | (same) |
| Commission Voting Record on 04-0191 | 11/9/04 | (same) |
| 3. SECY-04-0200 | 10/26/04 | A Risk-Informed Approach to Defining the Design Basis Tornado for New Reactor Licensing |
| Information Paper | | |
| 1. SECY-04-0197 | 10/25/04 | Update of the Risk-Informed Regulation Implementation Plan |
| Memorandum | | |
| 1. M041110 | 11/10/04 | Affirmation Session: I. SECY-04-0186 (Exelon Generation Company, LLC (Clinton Esp Site), LBP-04-17 (August 6, 2004)); II. SECY-04-0189 - U.S. Department of Energy (High Level Waste Repository: Pre-application Matters); DOE's Appeal of LBP-04-20 |

Commission Correspondences

1. Letter to Senator James M. Jeffords, dated November 2, 2004, responds to letter regarding the engineering team inspection conducted at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.

November 12, 2004

ENCLOSURE O

2. Letter to Senator Patrick Leahy, dated November 2, 2004, responds to letter regarding the engineering team inspection conducted at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.
3. Letter to Congressman Bernard Sanders, dated November 2, 2004, responds to letter regarding the engineering team inspection conducted at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste, notice of 155th meeting on November 16-18, 2004.
2. NUREG-1600, NRC Enforcement Policy, ACTION: Policy Statement: Revision.
3. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, Meeting of the Subcommittee on Plant License Renewal, Notice of Meeting for 12/01/04.

Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

New England Radiological Health Committee (NERHC) Meeting

The Regional State Agreement Officer (RSAO) attended the annual meeting of the NERHC on November 3-5, in Portland, Maine. The meeting was well attended by representatives from nearly all Agreement and non-Agreement States within New England, as well as several federal agencies. Topics of discussion, among others, included counter-terrorism, low-level radioactive waste, site decommissioning, and a tritium accident case-study. The RSAO provided an update on NRC issues and in particular, those important to the New England states.

November 12, 2004

ENCLOSURE P

Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 12, 2004

Tennessee Valley Authority - Watts Bar Operator License Certificate Presentation

On November 9, 2004, the Deputy Regional Administrator attended a presentation ceremony of operator license certificates held in Spring City, Tennessee for the recently licensed operators at the Watts Bar nuclear power plant. On the following day, the Deputy Regional Administrator visited the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant for a site tour and met with licensee management and the resident inspectors.

U. S. Enrichment Corporation - Licensee Performance Review

On November 9, 2004, Region II staff conducted a public meeting to discuss the Licensee Performance Review for the U. S. Enrichment Corporation's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Piketon, Ohio.