

April 12, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

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

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - SECY-04-0030 - DEVELOPMENT OF
A MORE ROBUST MATERIALS RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Commission has approved option 2 of SECY-04-0030, to initiate a more pro-active radiation protection research program, subject to the following. The staff in both the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research (RES) and in the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) should continue to look for ways to build a more robust materials program in RES by evaluating if there are NMSS activities that more appropriately belong in RES.

The staff should maintain strong oversight of this more pro-active 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 NRC goals and the strategies for meeting those goals, and resources for specific projects should be addressed through the normal planning, budgeting and performance management (PBPM) process. Regarding the staff's proposal for a more robust forward thinking research program, the Commission can certainly understand the need to be conscious of new and better ways to efficiently and effectively conduct NRC business. At the same time, the NRC should devote the majority of its limited resources to addressing critical needs. The Commission expects very strong management in the PBPM process over this aspect of the proposed research program.

In addition, to reduce costs, this program should be initiated with greater reliance on in-house staff rather than contractors. For the international effort, staff and management should focus on the strategic goals of the Commission and limit international travel to the defined needs of the Commission.

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.

cc: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
OGC
CFO
OCA
OIG
OPA
Office Directors, Regions, ACRS, ACNW, ASLBP (via E-Mail)
PDR