

March 15, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director for Operations

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

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - BRIEFING ON NUCLEAR FUEL PERFORMANCE, 10:30 A.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2005, COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE WHITE FLINT NORTH, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND (OPEN TO PUBLIC ATTENDANCE)

The Commission was briefed by representatives of the nuclear industry, which included reactor licensees from South Texas and Exelon; fuel vendors from Framatome-ANP, Global Nuclear Fuels, and Westinghouse; and the Electric Power Research Institute, as well as the NRC staff on nuclear fuel performance issues. The Commission noted at the outset that the number of fuel failures observed in 2002 and 2003 remained low and well within technical specification limits. However, the Commission was interested in reducing the recent increased trend in fuel failures because of the potential for increased worker dose, limitations on allowable stay times for workers and NRC inspectors in high dose areas, higher decommissioning costs, and challenges in management of spent fuel.

The NRC staff should continue to monitor industry efforts to improve fuel reliability and fuel performance trends. The staff should report to the Commission if any regulatory impediments to the success of these efforts are either identified by the staff or raised by stakeholders.

cc: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
Commissioner Jaczko
Commissioner Lyons
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