

December 6, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: Luis A. Reyes  
Executive Director for Operations

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

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - BRIEFING ON DIGITAL INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL, 9:30 A.M., Wednesday, NOVEMBER 8, 2006, COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE WHITE FLINT NORTH, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND (OPEN TO PUBLIC ATTENDANCE)

The Commission was briefed by representatives of the nuclear power industry and the NRC staff on issues related to the use of digital instrumentation and control (I&C) in both safety and non-safety systems at nuclear power plants.

Senior NRC managers should engage industry to establish an NRC project plan with specific milestones and deliverables to address deployment of digital I&C, using a model similar to the successful one used to address reactor license renewal. This project plan should account for the different development paths associated with nuclear power plant digital I&C, i.e., digital upgrades at existing plants, and requirements for combined license applications expected both in the near term and in the out-years. The short term milestones should address critical path actions, while the long term objective of this plan should be to establish regulatory requirements, standards, and guidelines, as appropriate, that allow licensees to forward-fit digital enhancements without unnecessary regulatory burden.

The staff should establish short term priorities for conducting research and revising regulatory guidance in light of resource restrictions imposed by Continuing Budget Resolutions. The staff should seek industry comment on these priorities.

The staff and industry should brief the Commission in approximately six months on the progress being made toward the deployment of digital I&C, including such topics as maintaining diversity and defense-in-depth, risk-informed digital I&C, operator training, cyber security, and lessons learned from the experiences of other industries and agencies with digital systems. At this briefing, the staff should invite experts from organizations such as EPRI, digital I&C vendors, transmission system operators, and other potential stakeholders.

The staff should provide a webpage on the NRC public website dedicated to digital I&C issues and developments in order to enhance stakeholder communication and participation during the ongoing efforts to develop associated regulatory guidance documents.

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