
Task V.C: Advisory Committees

The objective of this task was to strengthen the role of advisory committees in Commission activities.

ITEM V.C.1: STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS

DESCRIPTION

This NUREG-0660,¹ Rev. 1 item called for the Commission to strengthen the role of the ACRS by seeking legislation which would eliminate its compulsory jurisdiction and by considering ACRS views on the President's Commission recommendations regarding its role. This item was originally identified as Item 3 in Chapter V but was made Item V.C.1 in Rev. 1 to NUREG-0660.²

In a letter³ to the Commission in January 1980, the ACRS agreed with the recommendations that the role of ACRS be strengthened. In April 1981, 10 CFR Part 2 was revised to provide for ACRS participation in rulemakings involving safety issues.

This item is related to increasing knowledge, certainty, and understanding of safety issues in order to increase confidence in assessing levels of safety and is, therefore, considered a licensing issue.

CONCLUSION

This Licensing Issue was resolved with the revision to 10 CFR Part 2.

ITEM V.C.2: STUDY NEED FOR ADDITIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

DESCRIPTION

This NUREG-0660,⁴ Rev. 1 item called for the Commission to determine whether NRC should establish additional advisory committees such as a citizens' advisory committee or a general advisory committee similar to that of the Atomic Energy Commission. This item was originally identified as Item 4 in Chapter V but was made Item V.C.2 in Rev. 1 to NUREG-0660.⁵

In July 1980, the Commission decided that no further advisory committees were needed.⁶ At the Commission's request, the Offices of Public Affairs, Policy Evaluation, and General Counsel developed methods to ensure that a broader spectrum of representatives of the public and other outside organizations appear before the Commission on a periodic basis.⁷ This plan was presented to the

¹ NUREG-0660, "NRC Action Plan Developed as a Result of the TMI-2 Accident," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, May 1980, (Rev. 1) August 1980.

² NUREG-0660, "NRC Action Plan Developed as a Result of the TMI-2 Accident," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, May 1980, (Rev. 1) August 1980.

³ Letter to J. Ahearn from M. Plesset, "Recommendations of President's Commission on ACRS Role," January 15, 1980. [8002150071]

⁴ NUREG-0660, "NRC Action Plan Developed as a Result of the TMI-2 Accident," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, May 1980, (Rev. 1) August 1980.

⁵ NUREG-0660, "NRC Action Plan Developed as a Result of the TMI-2 Accident," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, May 1980, (Rev. 1) August 1980.

⁶ Memorandum for W. Dircks et al. from J. Hoyle, "Staff Requirements—Discussion of Action Plan, Chapter V (See SECY-80-230B), 2:00 p.m. Monday, July 7, 1980, Commissioners' Conference Room, D.C. Office (Open to Public Attendance)," July 9, 1980. [8012030928]

⁷ Memorandum for Commissioner Ahearn et al. from L. Bickwit et al., "TMI Action Plan, Chapter V, Formal Procedures for Ensuring Periodic Public Interaction," October 2, 1980.

Commission in October 1980 and was subsequently approved.

This item is related to increasing knowledge, certainty, and understanding of safety issues in order to increase confidence in assessing levels of safety and is, therefore, considered a licensing issue.

CONCLUSION

This Licensing Issue has been resolved.

ITEM V.C.3: STUDY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR SAFETY BOARD

DESCRIPTION

This NUREG-0660,⁸ Rev. 1 item called for the Commission to study the need to establish a Nuclear Safety Board that would independently investigate nuclear accidents and important incidents and would monitor and evaluate the quality of NRC's regulatory process. This item was originally identified as Item 8 in Chapter V but was made Item V.C.3 in Rev. 1 to NUREG-0660.⁹

Commission consideration of an independent board to investigate nuclear accidents preceded the TMI-2 accident. In August 1978, the NRC Chairman responded¹⁰ to a series of questions on a nuclear accident board posed by Congress.¹¹ After the TMI-2 accident, the President established a Nuclear Safety Oversight Committee by Executive Order 12202 in March 1980.¹² This committee was terminated on September 30, 1980. In July 1980, the Commission decided that an independent Nuclear Safety Board was not needed.¹³ Subsequently, in 1984 Congress directed the NRC to conduct a study of the need for and feasibility of an independent organization responsible for conducting investigations of significant safety events at NRC-licensed facilities. In response, the NRC contracted with BNL; BNL submitted its final report to the NRC in February 1985.

BNL recommended the establishment of a statutory office of nuclear safety, headed by a Director reporting to the Commission. However, the study stated current practices for investigations of operating events have been conducted in a "proficient and technically competent" manner. While BNL suggested a number of improvements for event investigations, it was noted that, for the most part, these improvements could be implemented within the present organizational structure. Many of the improvements recommended by BNL have been adopted as part of the NRC Incident Investigation Program. Based on the Commission's review of the BNL report and other studies of the issue, the Commission believed that there were no major deficiencies in the NRC accident investigation program that would warrant formation of an independent Nuclear Safety Board. (Testimony by Chairman Zech to the Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, concerning Licensing Reform and Other Matters, July 22, 1986.)

This item is related to increasing knowledge, certainty, and understanding of safety issues in order to increase confidence in assessing levels of safety and is, therefore, considered a licensing issue.

⁸ NUREG-0660, "NRC Action Plan Developed as a Result of the TMI-2 Accident," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, May 1980, (Rev. 1) August 1980.

⁹ NUREG-0660, "NRC Action Plan Developed as a Result of the TMI-2 Accident," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, May 1980, (Rev. 1) August 1980.

¹⁰ Letter to the Honorable Morris K. Udall from Joseph M. Hendrie, August 7, 1978. [7901030172, 8001230259]

¹¹ Letter to Joseph Hendrie from Morris K. Udall, January 27, 1978. [8007210279, 8007180431]

¹² Memorandum for J. Taylor from D. Morrison, "Resolution of Generic Safety Issue 15, 'Radiation Effects on Reactor Vessel Supports,'" May 29, 1996. [9606190081]

¹³ Memorandum for W. Dircks et al. from J. Hoyle, "Staff Requirements—Discussion of Action Plan, Chapter V (See SECY-80-230B), 2:00 p.m. Monday, July 7, 1980, Commissioners' Conference Room, D.C. Office (Open to Public Attendance)," July 9, 1980. [8012030928]

CONCLUSION

This Licensing Issue has been resolved.