

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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INFORMATION REPORT

SECY-00-0016

January 19, 2000

For: The Commissioners
From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
Subject: SECY-00-016 WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK
ENDING JANUARY 14, 2000

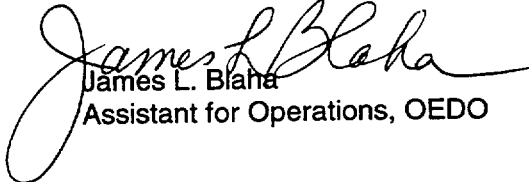
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*No input this week.


James L. Blaha
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 14, 2000

Maine Yankee

Between approximately 4:00 p.m. Friday, January 7, 2000, and 7:00 a.m. Saturday, January 8, 2000, the Decommissioning Operations Contractor for the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station was filling the pit outside the containment building equipment hatch with clean water. The water was being used in the concrete-cutting process near the containment equipment hatch. Approximately 5500 gallons of slightly contaminated water leaked through a gap near the top of the pit to an exterior containment building foundation sump, then flowed eventually into a storm drain. This off normal condition was not discovered by station personnel for a period of 15 hours. The storm drain empties into the forebay, which empties into the Back River through tidal flow.

The water in the pit was contaminated with low levels of cesium-137(Cs-137) and cobalt-60 (Co-60) due to residual contamination in the pit and possibly the concrete-cutting operations. The licensee initially reported to the NRC that less than 0.01 total curies (10,000 microcuries) were released, but later updated the amount to less than 90 microcuries. Measured concentrations of the water in the pit were 3.55 E-7 microcuries/cc of Cs-137 and 1.18 E-7 microcuries/cc of Co-60. These values are less than the NRC release limits for both Cs-137 (3 E-6 microcuries/cc) and Co-60 (1 E-6 microcuries/cc). Samples taken from the storm drain showed no measurable levels of radioactive material.

Notification was made initially to the state because the activity released, although not in excess of what was allowed, was not scheduled for release. Because the state was notified, notification of the NRC was required under NRC regulations (10 CFR 50.72 (b) (2) (vi)).

The licensee has pumped the water from the pit and is evaluating the concrete-cutting operations to prevent future releases.

Reactor Oversight Process Improvements

As part of its effort to communicate with external stakeholders regarding the revised oversight process, the Inspection Program and Regional staff conducted roundtable meetings in the vicinity of both Prairie Island and FitzPatrick on January 5, 2000, and January 6, 2000, respectively. At these meetings, the NRC staff discussed the new risk informed oversight process with members of the local public and state and local officials and obtained their feedback on the process and the recently concluded pilot program. The meetings were well attended and focused on the public's perception of the revised reactor oversight process.

The Inspection Program Branch conducted the Revised Reactor Oversight Process Pilot Program Lessons Learned Public Workshop, from January 10 through 13, 2000. During this workshop NRC staff and Nuclear Energy Institute and industry representatives discussed pilot program lessons learned issues developed by both the NRC and the industry. NRC and industry have identified issues associated with Performance Indicators, Baseline Inspection Program, Significance Determination Process, Enforcement and Assessment, Problem

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Identification and Resolution, and Communications. These issues have an impact on key NRC performance goals. These issues will be discussed in detail during breakout sessions of the workshop to determine their impact on initial implementation and to provide recommendations for their resolution.

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Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
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Washington State Comments on Draft Environmental Assessment on Release of Solutions at Siemens Nuclear Fuel Facility

On January 4, 2000, the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards (FCSS) received a letter dated December 27, 1999, from the Washington State Departments of Health and Ecology commenting on the draft Environmental Assessment associated with a proposal by Siemens to sell solutions containing trace amounts of uranium as fertilizer. The state raises a number of concerns about the proposal, including state jurisdiction over such releases. FCSS plans to discuss the concerns with the licensee and the state. Once the comments have been adequately addressed, a final decision will be made relative to the acceptability of the Siemens' proposal.

Meeting Regarding Department of Energy Material Storage Areas

The Department of Energy (DOE), the U.S. Enrichment Corporation (USEC), and staff from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards (FCSS) met in a series of meetings in an attempt to resolve issues associated with the completion of the work needed for the seismic modifications to cascade buildings C-331 and C-335 required by Paducah Compliance Plan Issue 36. A fifth meeting was held on January 10, 2000, to discuss a third schedule for characterization of the DOE Material Storage Areas (DMSAs) proposed by USEC. This schedule, requested by DOE, focused on completing the 12 high priority criticality DMSAs of concern to DOE and delayed working on the remaining portions of DMSAs (9 footprints) needed to complete the seismic modifications. This schedule showed that the 12 DMSAs could be completed by September 27, 2000, and the completion of the seismic modifications would be delayed by 4 months to January 2001. Even with the emphasis on completion of the 12 high priority DMSAs only, DOE staff still found the third schedule completion dates unacceptable for that work. Subsequent to the meeting, DOE and USEC have agreed that USEC will move ahead with a modified integrated schedule which will accomplish both criticality and DMSA work, focusing on characterization only for the 12 DMSAs in an effort to improve upon the completion date for assessing the criticality risk associated with these DMSAs. According to USEC, following this schedule will allow the seismic modifications to be completed as currently estimated by September 2000. FCSS staff is continuing discussion at various levels with DOE to bring this matter to resolution and consult with the Commission as quickly as possible.

Region IV Regional Administrator Signed a Letter of Agreement

The Region IV Regional Administrator signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the Regional Director, Gulf of Mexico Region of the Minerals Management Service (MMS), U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), concerning radiation safety inspections of Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensed activities on offshore platforms and laybarges in federal jurisdictions. The LOA provides for air transportation arrangements of NRC inspectors to offshore facilities by MMS-contracted helicopters at no charge or exchange of services to NRC. The LOA also provides for licensed material orientation and radiation safety program training to MMS staff by NRC. This will enable MMS to notify NRC in case MMS recognizes irregularities in licensees' activities

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(e.g., industrial radiographers working on offshore platforms). NRC signed the LOA on December 23, 1999, and DOI signed it on January 7, 2000. The LOA will be published soon in the Federal Register.

Public Meeting Regarding the Draft Policy Statement on the Decommissioning Criteria for the West Valley Demonstration Project and West Valley Site

On January 5, 2000, staff from the Division of Waste Management and the Office of the General Counsel held a public meeting in West Valley, New York, regarding the draft Policy Statement on the Decommissioning Criteria for the West Valley Demonstration Project and the West Valley Site. As directed by the Commission, the draft Policy Statement was published in the Federal Register on December 3, 1999, for a 60-day comment period. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information and hold a discussion with the public on the Policy Statement and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) related regulatory responsibilities. The meeting also allowed the public the opportunity to make formal comments.

Attendees at the public meeting included: the general public; the Seneca Nation of Indians; the West Valley Citizen Task Force; the Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County, Inc.; the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes; the Nuclear Information and Resource Service; the Department of Energy (DOE) and its contractors; the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA); and the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, there was substantial media interest. The issues of greatest concern consisted of: (1) waste types in the state-licensed disposal area and how its presence would affect the NRC's responsibilities; (2) the definition of institutional controls and how they will be implemented; (3) the relationship between institutional controls and engineered barriers; (4) implementation of the license termination rule; (5) implementation of NRC's responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act; (6) coordination of these responsibilities with DOE and NYSERDA; and (7) the clarity of the draft Policy Statement. In addition, several requests were made to extend the comment period beyond the February 1, 2000, deadline. The extension request, resolution of comments, and discussion of issues will be addressed by the staff in subsequent correspondence with the Commission. Prior to the meeting, the staff toured the West Valley Demonstration Project and the West Valley site.

High-Level Waste Disposal Criticality Meeting

On January 5-6, 2000, staff from the Division of Waste Management met with representatives from the Department of Energy, the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program (NNPP) and their contractors at Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was the first technical exchange between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the NNPP, after the NNPP's submittal of the "Addendum to the Disposal Criticality Analysis Methodology Topical Report for Naval Spent Nuclear Fuel." The topics covered in this technical exchange were: (1) features, events, processes (FEPS); and (2) materials, with respect to the design of the criticality control system for the Navy's disposal packages to be placed at the proposed Yucca Mountain repository. During the exchange, the NNPP's contractors addressed a number of issues which the NRC staff had raised as the result of its technical review. The staff will continue with its detailed technical review.

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Department of Energy Public Meetings on Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Yucca Mountain

On January 11, 2000, staff from the Division of Waste Management observed the Department of Energy (DOE) public meetings on DOE's draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a geologic repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada. DOE held two public meetings (day and evening sessions) in Las Vegas, Nevada. Approximately 400 people attended these meetings and 76 individuals offered comments. Commenters included representatives from the Office of the Governor for the state of Nevada; state of Nevada Attorney General's Office; Native Americans; Affected Units of Local Government; and non-government organizations (environmental and union groups, etc.). Most commenters voiced opposition to DOE's proposal to construct, operate, monitor, and eventually close a geologic repository for the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste radioactive waste at Yucca Mountain. Comments on the DEIS covered a wide range of issues, including the no action alternative; transportation impacts; impacts to Native Americans; ground water contamination; seismicity; volcanism; consideration of equity issues (compensation to Nevada); use of available data; and consultation with state and local governments. Additional DOE public meetings on the DEIS are scheduled at five other locations.

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Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
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Publication of NUREG-1717

NUREG-1717, "Systematic Radiological Assessment of Exemptions for Source and Byproduct Materials," has been published as a draft for comment. The document sets forth potential radiation doses associated with the current exemptions for byproduct and source material in the NRC's regulations. The study was initiated in 1990 through a contract with Oak Ridge National Laboratory to assess doses, using methods consistent with the then new requirements in 10 CFR Part 20. The information in this draft NUREG can be used to review and examine the radiological impact of current exemptions.

Potential radiation doses were estimated for the normal life cycle of a particular product or material, including distribution and transport, intended or expected routine use, and disposal over a 1-year time period. Also presented is an assessment of potential radiological impacts associated with selected products containing byproduct material that currently may only be used under a general license and that may be potential candidates for exemption from licensing requirements.

The draft NUREG has been sent to all the Agreement States, general licensees and known facilities using or manufacturing products or materials containing exempt quantities of radioactive material. [The draft NUREG is also available at <http://www.nrc.gov/>, under "Technical Reports" on the "Reference Library" page.] It is expected that publication of this draft NUREG will elicit information from the public on the current use of the exempt products and materials. This information will be incorporated into a final NUREG that is scheduled to be published in December 2000.

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Incident Response Operations
Items of Interest
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PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATIONS:

1. PNO-I-00-003, Test-Con., Inc., THEFT OF MOISTURE-DENSITY GAUGE
2. PNO-II-00-001, US Department of the Navy, RECENT MEDIA REPORTS ABOUT EVENT INVOLVING DEPLETED URANIUM AMMUNITION
3. PNO-I-00-002, Maine Yankee Atomic Power Co., UNSCHEDULED RELEASE OF RADIOACTIVE WATER FROM MAINE YANKEE PLANT
4. PNO-IV-00-003, State of Texas, STOLEN PORTABLE MOISTURE/DENSITY GAUGE
5. PNO-IV-00-004, State of California, STOLEN PORTABLE MOISTURE/DENSITY GAUGE

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Office of Administration
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Bob Christie; Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-50-68)

A document that requests public comment on a petition for rulemaking submitted by Bob Christie, Performance Technology, was published in the Federal Register on January 12, 2000 (65 FR 1829). The petitioner requests that the NRC amend its regulations concerning hydrogen control systems at nuclear power plants. The petitioner believes that the suggested amendments are necessary to eliminate situations that present adverse conditions at nuclear power plants. The comment period on this action closes March 27, 2000.

Contract Award

On December 22, 1999, DCPM issued a competitive contract to ICF, Incorporated to obtain technical assistance, on a task order basis, for the review, analysis, and instruction related to the Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards financial assurance guidelines and requirements. The contract period of performance is January 3, 2000, through January 2, 2005. The total value of the contract is \$760,296 for the base period of five years. There are no option periods. Streamlining initiatives utilized included: electronic transmittal of SOW; waiving the CBD notice (Technical Assistance); setting a deadline for proposers' questions; reducing proposal preparation time; using less than three SEP technical members; limiting competition to known sources; oral presentations; prohibiting foldouts and sales brochures in proposals and; limiting number of pages in proposals.

Focused Source Selection Innovation

On January 12, 2000, the Division of Contracts and Property Management implemented its new alternative source selection procedure, "Focused Source Selection" with the posting of two management and support services requirements on the Internet: (<http://www.nrc.gov/ADM/CONTRACT/webpage1.html>) 1) Development and Implementation of Agency-Wide Wellness Program and Operation of Headquarters Employee Health and Fitness Centers; and 2) Technical Support for NMSS Computerized Risk Assessment and Data Analysis Laboratory (CRADAL) in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Three-Dimensional Modeling. NRC is the first agency to be granted authorization by OMB to test this new innovation. Under NRC's "Focused Source Selection" process, comments on draft statements of work will be solicited on the Internet and concurrently, the most promising interested sources will be identified; the three most highly rated sources will develop technical and cost proposals; and negotiations will be held with the top rated proposer. The NRC expects to achieve time savings, cost savings, and increased customer satisfaction on the part of both NRC program offices and private companies doing business with the NRC through the use of this source selection innovation. Comments on the current two draft SOWs and capability statements are due on January 27, 2000.

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Chief Information Officer
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Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 5-Day Period of
January 7, 2000 through January 13, 2000:

Sharon Harris Plant, CP&L, spent fuel pool and heat load calculation reference documents.
(FOIA/PA 2000-0096)

Self, OI report 4-99-052. (FOIA/PA 2000-0097)

Oyster Creek plant in New Jersey, GPU Nuclear, endangered and threatened sea turtles, 1996
through 01/07/00. (FOIA/PA 2000-0098)

Self, OI report file, 3-1998-033. (FOIA/PA 2000-0099)

Surrey plant, any problems involving TN-32 casks, 11/11/99 through 01/12/00.
(FOIA/PA 2000-0100)

W.R. Grace, Curtis Bay Facility, 5550 Chemical Rd., Baltimore, MD, 1909 to present.
(FOIA/PA 2000-0101)

Self, OIG report 99-18H, unredacted version.(FOIA/PA 2000-0102)

Salem plants, Public Service Electric & Gas Co., endangered and threatened sea turtles, 1996
to present. (FOIA/PA 2000-0103)

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Chief Financial Officer
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Visit by Representatives of AECB

On January 27, 2000, representatives from the Canadian Atomic Energy Control Board will visit the NRC to discuss NRC's fee policies and fee development process. Those attending from the Atomic Energy Control Board include the Director of Finance and the Manager, Cost Recovery Program.

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Office of Human Resources
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Arrivals		
BLEVINS, Matthew	PROJECT MANAGER	NMSS
LaVALLE, James	COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYST	OCIO
NIELSEN, Lisa	SECRETARY	OCFO
STRNISHA, James M.	GENERAL ENGINEER	NRR
Departures		
LaHAIE, Brian	MANAGEMENT AIDE	OCIO
LUNDY, Anna	SECRETARY (OA)	NMSS/FCSS
RINI, Brett	TECHNICAL INTERN	NRR
STRZELEC, Amanda	TECHNICAL INTERN	RI

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Office of Public Affairs
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Media Interest

There was press interest in DOE's announcement that they will not recycle radioactive nickel.

Print and television reporters attended Chairman Meserve's press conference at Paducah.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
00-8	NRC Issues Mid-Cycle Reviews for 13 Nuclear Plants Participating in Pilot Test of Revised Reactor Oversight Process
00-9	NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to Meet in Clearwater, Florida, January 27-29
00-10	NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to Meet in Rockville, Maryland, February 2
00-11	NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to Meet in Rockville, Maryland, February 3-5
00-12	NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to Meet in Clemson, South Carolina, on February 24
00-13	NRC Staff Schedules Three-Day Conference to Discuss Regulatory Issues With Nuclear Industry
Regions:	
I-00-2	NRC Completes Agency Action on Letters of Reprimand Issued to Millstone Managers in Employee Discrimination Case
I-00-3	Moisture-Density Gauge Containing Radioactive Material is Reported Missing by Connecticut Company
I-00-4	NRC, Connecticut Panel to Discuss Millstone Programs on Jan. 20
II-00-1	NRC Commissioner to Visit St. Lucie Nuclear Plant on January 14
II-00-2	NRC to Hold "Roundtable Discussion" at Public Meeting on New Reactor Oversight Program on January 20 in Cary
II-00-3	NRC to Hold "Roundtable Discussion" at Public Meeting on New Reactor Oversight Program on January 25 in Chattanooga
III-00-2	NRC to Hold "Roundtable Discussion" at Public Meeting on New Reactor Oversight Program at Quad Cities Nuclear Plant

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III-00-3

NRC Commissioner Diaz to Visit D.C. Cook Nuclear Plant

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Office of the Secretary
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Document Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. SECY-99-284	12/15/99	Classification of Savannah River Residual Tank Waste as Incidental
2. Supplemental (Second) SRM on COMSECY-99-031	1/11/00	Additional Information Concerning Staff Requirements - SECY-99-070 - Implementation Plan for the Public Communications Initiative (DSI-14)
3. COMSECY-00-0001	1/5/00	Non-Sunshine Act Discussions
SRM on -0001	1/13/00	(same)
Chmn Meserve comments on -0001	1/11/00	(same)
Comm. Dicus comments on -0001	1/12/00	(same)
Comm. Diaz comments on -0001	1/10/00	(same)
Comm. McGaffigan comments on -0001	1/6/00	(same)
Comm. Merrifield comment son -0001	1/11/00	(same)
Information Papers		
1. SECY-00-0006	1/6/00	SECY-00-0006 Weekly Information Report - Weeks Ending December 24, 1999 and December 31, 1999
2. SECY-99-290	12/27/99	NRC Plans to Participate in the OECD Halden Reactor Project During 2000-2002

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to Congressmen Dingell, Klink and Markey dated January 7, 2000, concerns the release into interstate commerce of radioactively contaminated metal and materials.

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2. Letter to North Dakota Governor Schafer dated January 4, 2000, concerns the NRC State Liaison Officer Program.
3. Letter to Ortziger, Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, dated January 4, 2000, responds to expressed disappointment in the Commission decision not to include funds for reimbursement for certain work by Agreement States at NRC formerly licensed sites.
4. Letter to potential candidates to sit on a Screening Panel to review nominations for positions on NRC's Advisory Committee on the Medical Uses of Isotopes (ACMUI), dated January 4, 2000.

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Meeting of the Subcommittee on Plant License Renewal; Notice of Meeting on February 24, 2000.
2. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Subcommittee Meeting on Planning and Procedures; Notice of Meeting on February 2, 2000.
3. 10 CFR Part 40; Docket No. PRM-40-28; Donald A. Barbour, Philotechnics; Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking.
4. 10 CFR Parts 2 and 50; Antitrust Review Authority: Clarification; Proposed Rule; Extension of Comment Period.
5. Molycorp, Inc.; Docket No. 40-8778-MLA-2; Designation of Presiding Officer (Charles Bechhoefer).

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Region I
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Millstone 1 Decommissioning Advisory Committee

Paul Cataldo of the Millstone resident inspection staff attended a January 6, 2000 meeting of the Millstone 1 Decommissioning Advisory Committee (MIDAC). This committee, a subcommittee of the Connecticut Nuclear Energy Advisory Council, functions as a forum for public involvement in the decommissioning of Millstone 1. Presentations to MIDAC were made by Paul Blanche, representing himself, and by Michael Meisner, on behalf of NEI. Mr. Blanche was critical of the lack of NRC consolidated regulations for decommissioning. Mr. Meisner described NEI's decommissioning activities. The meeting was attended by two members of the public and six members of the licensee staff. The committee plans to meet monthly.

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Region II
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Commissioner Merrifield Visits Florida Power and Light Company's St. Lucie Plant

On January 14, Commissioner Merrifield visited the St. Lucie nuclear plant in Florida. The Regional Administrator accompanied the Commissioner on a tour of the facility and during meetings with licensee management and the resident inspectors. The Commissioner also held a briefing for members of the local media on the results of his visit and current tasks being carried out by the NRC. A staff member of the Senate and Environmental Public Works Committee also accompanied the Commissioner and Regional Administrator.

Reactor Oversight Lessons Learned Workshop

On January 10-14, Region II supported the public workshop on lessons learned for the revised reactor oversight process held in Washington, DC. The Director, Division of Reactor Projects, resident inspectors from both Region II pilot sites, and staff members from a number of areas, including emergency planning, radiological protection, and engineering participated in the workshop.

Vieques Island - Department of the Navy

On January 13, 2000, Region II received a request from the Puerto Rico Secretary of Health to perform a survey of the potential radiological conditions on the Island. The request was prompted by recent local news articles, which quoted radiation doses measured by an individual in the areas occupied by unauthorized individuals. The articles referred to a February 19, 1999, event, in which the Department of the Navy inadvertently fired ammunition containing depleted uranium into a naval weapons firing range on the Island. The Department of the Navy previously performed surveys and analyses for the amount of radiation resulting from the depleted uranium ammunition deposited on the Island. Region II is coordinating with the Navy to conduct another survey.

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Region IV
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Public Meeting at Comanche Peak

The Regional Administrator attended a public meeting that was held at Comanche Peak Steam Electric Station on January 13, 2000. The subject of the meeting was the licensee's performance during the recent Unit 1 refueling outage.

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