

NOTATION VOTE

RESPONSE SHEET

TO: Annette Vietti-Cook, Secretary
FROM: COMMISSIONER DICUS
SUBJECT: **SECY-99-273 - IMPACT OF CHANGES TO THE INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR REACTORS ON IMPLEMENTING THE ALLEGATION PROGRAM**

Approved ^{w/comments} x Disapproved _____ Abstain _____
Not Participating _____

COMMENTS:

See attached comments.

Anita Joy Dicus
SIGNATURE

December 21, 1999
DATE

Entered on "AS" Yes x No _____

COMMISSIONER DICUS' COMMENTS ON SECY-99-273, "IMPACT OF CHANGES TO THE INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR REACTORS ON IMPLEMENTING THE ALLEGATION PROGRAM"

I approve the staff recommendation to seek stakeholder input on options for modifying our allegation process.

The allegation process is one of our most important programs. An effective allegation process not only helps us maintain credibility as a regulator, it is vital in helping to ensure public health and safety. Under the current oversight process, we have long recognized that our inspection program is a sampling process and have used the allegation process to supplement our inspection program and help focus our inspection efforts. Under the new reactor oversight process and considering the potential change in the N+1 policy at sites with multiple reactors, we should continue to carefully consider the important role, perhaps even more important role, that the allegation process will play in helping us to fulfill our regulatory mission.

A more robust analysis of the applicability of the SDP process be considered. It appears that the feasibility assessment discussed in the paper considered only an a "tabletop" review and application of the SDP process. We should benchmark the SDP allegation review process by applying the process to allegations that have already been closed to determine whether the SDP initial review would screened out allegations that, after NRC review and inspection, identified issues of safety importance. This type of assessment may provide some measure of the fidelity of the SDP process for allegations and how often our inspection process determined an issue to be a safety significant issue even though an initial assessment of the allegation may lead us to believe that the allegation was not safety significant.

Finally, I agree with Commissioner Merrifield that we should not adopt changes to the allegation process which support a perception that the NRC is unresponsive to allegations or unacceptably reduces our ability to protect the identity of allegers. Similarly, for whatever option is ultimately supported by the Commission, appropriate consideration should be given for "piloting" the proposed changes to the allegation process.