

March 31,2000

Mr. Ralph Beedle
Senior Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Nuclear Energy Institute
Suite 400
1776 I Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006-3708

SUBJECT: STAFF ACCEPTANCE OF NEI 99-04, "GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING NRC COMMITMENT CHANGES"

Dear Mr. Beedle:

In a letter dated January 24, 1996, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff acknowledged that guidance prepared by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) was acceptable for use by licensees in managing NRC commitments. The NRC and industry had recognized the need for such guidance to clarify the handling and regulatory standing of commitments. The staff discussed its acceptance of the NEI guidance document (Revision 2 dated December 19, 1995) in SECY-95-300, "Nuclear Energy Institute's Guidance Document, 'Guideline for Managing NRC Commitments'," dated December 20, 1995.

The staff reassessed the issues associated with regulatory commitments during 1998 as a follow-up to the work documented in SECY-95-300 and in response to questions about the control of licensing basis information at some nuclear facilities. The staff documented our conclusions and plans for additional actions in SECY-98-224, "Staff and Industry Activities Pertaining to the Management of Commitments Made by Power Reactor Licensees to the NRC," dated September 28, 1998. The staff concluded that regulatory commitments remained a valuable tool in the regulatory process and that licensees generally implemented and appropriately controlled regulatory commitments. The staff subsequently met with licensees and NEI on several occasions during the development of the updated guidance document, NEI 99-04 [Revision 0], "Guidelines for Managing NRC Commitment Changes." The letter to me from A. R. Pietrangelo of NEI dated August 2, 1999, requested that the staff review and accept NEI 99-04.

We have completed our review of NEI 99-04 and find that it provides acceptable guidance for the control of regulatory commitments made by power reactor licensees to the NRC staff. We informed the Commission of our finding in SECY-00-045, "Acceptance of NEI 99-04, 'Guidelines for Managing NRC Commitments', " dated February 22, 2000. The staff will issue a regulatory issue summary to promote the use of the guidance provided by NEI 99-04 and to ensure that licensees and other agency stakeholders understand our regulatory processes. We have issued NRR Office Letter 900, "Managing Commitments Made by Licensees to the NRC," [ADAMS Accession Number ML 003692416]. The guidance in the Office Letter is consistent

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with the industry guidance in NEI 99-04. The NRR staff will use the Office Letter as guidance in interacting with licensees making regulatory commitments and in performing periodic assessments of licensees' commitment management programs.

Please address any questions regarding commitment management to Bill Reckley of my staff at (301) 415-1323.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Project No. 689

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