

POLICY ISSUE NOTATION VOTE

September 1, 2005

SECY-05-0160

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director for Operations /RA/

SUBJECT: PHASE I REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OUTREACH EFFORT

PURPOSE:

To (1) inform the Commission about the results of the staff's Phase I Congressional District Outreach efforts and to seek Commission affirmation of the staff's plan to continue with a limited program; and to (2) inform the Commission of staff's plans to distribute to Regional Administrators and Office Directors the Congressional District Outreach Working Group Initiatives for Enhancing In-House Communications and Connectivity.

BACKGROUND:

By memorandum dated January 10, 2005, the Directors of the Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) and Office of State and Tribal Programs (STP) informed Regional Administrators and Office Directors about the staff's Congressional District Outreach effort, which was initiated to address the Chairman's interest, as expressed during the October 14-15, 2004, Senior Management Meeting (Attachment 1). A working group was established and co-Chaired by STP and OCA, with participating members from the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), Region III,

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and the Office of the Executive Director for Operations (OEDO). The working group charter outlines a process and criteria for timely outreach with selected Congressional District offices to inform them about U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) regulatory activities of interest and to establish points of contact for exchange of information.

The working group, in coordination with Regional management and the Regional State Liaison Officers (RSLOs), rolled out the program through calls to Congressional District staff, following positive responses from initial OCA calls to Washington, D.C. Congressional offices, informing them about this effort. The calls offered face-to-face meetings between Regional representatives and Congressional District staff. The working group was also tasked with establishing closer connectivity among NRC Headquarters Program Offices, STP, OCA, OPA, OEDO, the Director of Communications, and the Regions, to include Public Affairs Officers and RSLOs, to better anticipate, communicate, and disseminate information of interest to NRC stakeholders. The results of these activities were conveyed to a Steering Committee, comprised of senior managers from the above organizations, with recommendations and alternatives for future Congressional District Outreach efforts and the associated resource implications.

DISCUSSION:

The OCA identified two facilities in each Region for initial Phase I Congressional District Outreach. When selecting the facilities, OCA chose those that have had routinely moderate or low Congressional interest. Because higher interest facilities, such as Indian Point and Davis Besse, already had well established Congressional District communications between OCA and the District staffs, it was determined there wasn't a need to establish outreach contacts with these offices. Following the identification of the corresponding Congressional District offices, OCA contacted the Washington, D.C. offices in order to brief them on NRC staff's plans and to obtain the names of the staffers in the District offices that would be contacted by the RSLOs to schedule face-to-face briefings.

During the first quarter of calendar year 2005, Regional office representatives held meetings with 19 Congressional District offices to explain NRC's mission and activities, including issues specific to their Districts, and to establish a point of contact for subsequent inquiries. Of the 19 Congressional District offices that the Regional representatives briefed (Attachment 2), feedback was received from 13 offices. All of the offices that responded said they now have a better understanding of the mission and role of the NRC. In addition, all the offices said the agenda of issues covered in the briefings was very thorough, and they were satisfied with the scope of issues. With regard to the usefulness of the briefings, 11 of the offices considered the briefings useful. Two responders said the briefings were not necessary for the type of work performed in their District office or the sort of information needed to perform their duties.

While NRC largely received positive comments regarding the conduct of these outreach efforts, it was clear that Congressional District office interest in nuclear regulatory issues varied. During the meetings with the various Congressional District offices in Region II, the Congressional District offices confirmed that their activities are principally established by and directed toward being responsive to individual questions and concerns posed by their respective constituents. Thus, while the NRC's interactions and information provided to the

Congressional District offices through outreach meetings may be of some interest to them, it does little to further enhance their primary programmatic interactions with their constituents.

In response to the briefing follow-up questions, the majority of the responders said that it would be beneficial for NRC to provide periodic outreach to Congressional District office staff as an ongoing program. The frequency for briefings ranged from annually to every two years, or as needed due to regulatory changes. The majority suggestion was annually.

One office representative suggested that NRC consider holding a single meeting in a central location in the State and invite all Congressional District offices to attend one meeting. This would be a more efficient way to provide interface; however, some Congressional District office representatives may be unwilling to travel to such a meeting, and the ability to have inter-personal contact on issues would be somewhat diminished.

Some of the offices recommended that the RSLOs provide status updates via e-mail. Two offices suggested that future briefings be more site specific or related to facilities within the State. Several offices appreciated the NRC brochures that were handed out at the briefings and will use them as reference material.

To date, the working group has expended approximately 530 hours of unbudgeted staff time to develop, brief and roll out Phase I of the Congressional District Outreach effort. Regional activity to support the conduct of the 19 separate briefings for Congressional District office representatives involved the expenditure of approximately 330 hours of unbudgeted staff time. This included time for setting up the meetings, meeting preparation, travel, and meeting conduct. While 19 offices were contacted, it is estimated that at least 105 additional offices could be candidates for outreach, if the program is continued. This number could increase substantially if NRC includes Congressional District offices that are in close proximity to major nuclear facilities, if multiple Senatorial District offices are included for States with multiple facilities (each Senator is likely to have multiple District offices in each State), and if other major licensed facilities are included, other than commercial nuclear power plants, to determine Congressional District office contacts of interest.

The OCA has had traditional responsibility for interface with Congress and their representatives on nuclear regulatory issues. The OCA, however, has no Regional component, and consequently the lead for carrying out the Phase I Congressional District Outreach program fell to Regional personnel involved in State programs or other program management. If the Congressional District Outreach program is continued, program ownership should be clear, guidance should be developed, and resources should be allocated for program implementation.

The working group also looked at ways to establish closer connectivity among NRC Headquarters Program Offices, STP, OCA, OPA, OEDO, the Director of Communications, and the Regions, to include Public Affairs Officers and RSLOs, to better anticipate, communicate, and disseminate information of interest to NRC stakeholders. The working group found that outreach efforts and connectivity activities among Offices already exist but, perhaps because it is not documented procedurally or well advertised, it may go unnoticed. Additionally, the establishment of the Communications Council, which consists of representatives from NRC Headquarters and Regional offices, has enhanced internal communications. Based on these findings, the working group drafted and briefed the Communications Council members on the Congressional District Outreach effort and also provided a draft Proposal for Enhancing In-house Communications and Connectivity. The proposal included a table, which documented numerous meetings throughout the agency in which various Offices and Regions are currently represented, as well as suggestions for further enhancing connectivity within NRC. The

Communications Council reviewed and provided additional suggestions for improving connectivity within NRC. These suggestions were incorporated and the Congressional District Outreach Steering Committee subsequently approved the Working Group Initiatives for Enhancing In-House Communications and Connectivity (Attachment 3). Staff plans to share this analysis with the NRC Offices and Regions for their information.

OPTIONS:

The working group reviewed the results of the meetings, deliberated the lessons learned from these meetings, and developed the options below for the future of the Congressional District Outreach program.

1. Full Program - Expand the current program to conduct three to five Congressional District Outreach meetings each year in each Region, or as many as additional resources will allow. This option would maximize the NRC's interactions with Congressional District staff, but would require a significant increase in Regional resources, depending on the level of outreach desired.
2. Limited Program - Continue with the current program to conduct two or three meetings per year in each Region. The NRC would have to identify the specific Districts and/or District staff where NRC presence and interaction is most needed. A program would have to be developed for interaction with Congressional District representatives on an as-needed basis, such as interface when issues of significant public interest arise for facilities in their District or State. This option would give NRC an increased profile in District offices, and would require reallocation of resources in FY 2006. The FY 2007 budget, which was approved by the Commission, includes resources to support Phase II activities under this option.
3. No Formal Program - No additional resources necessary.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission affirm staff's plans to implement Option 2, as presented above, including directing management to assign program responsibility to a lead Office.

RESOURCES:

In FY 2006 and 2007, it is estimated that resources to implement the full program would be approximately 0.8 FTE and \$5K for each Region and 0.5 FTE for STP per year. It is estimated that resources to implement the limited program would be approximately 0.4 FTE and \$2.5K for each Region and 0.3 FTE for STP per year. The FY 2007 budget, which was approved by the Commission, contains the resources to implement the limited program to support Congressional District Outreach activities. Congressional District Outreach activities for FY 2006 are currently unbudgeted. If the Commission directs implementation of a limited program in FY 2006, which we believe would satisfy the needs of the Congressional District offices, STP would be able to absorb Headquarters and Regional FTE resources within the existing budget by reallocating resources from lower priority activities.

COORDINATION:

The Office of the General Counsel reviewed this Commission paper and has no legal objections. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this Commission paper for resource implications and has no objections.

/RA/

Luis A. Reyes
Executive Director
for Operations

Attachments:

1. Memorandum dated 01/10/05, including Working Group Charter and Initial List of Congressional District Office Contacts
2. Briefings with Congressional District Staff
3. Analysis for Enhancing In-House Communications and Connectivity

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***See previous concurrence.**

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OFFICE	STP	OCA	STP:DD	OCA:D	OPA	RIII
NAME	ROVirgilio:kk:gd	BJKeeling	DKRathbun	WNOutlaw	EBBrenner	GEGrant
DATE	7/27/05*	8/1/05*	7/28/05*	8/3/05*	8/11/05*	8/2/05*

OFFICE	OGC	CFO	STP:D	DEDMRS	EDO
NAME	SATreby	JLFunches (LBarnett for)	PHLohaus	MJVirgilio	LAReyes
DATE	7/29/05*	8/19/05*	7/28/05* 8/26/05*	09/01/05*	09/01/05

BRIEFINGS WITH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES			
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE	CONTACT/ ORGANIZATION	SCHEDULED MEETING	ACTUAL MEETING
Senator Edward Kennedy Boston, MA	OCA/Region I	02/23/05	02/23/05
Senator John Kerry Boston, MA	OCA/Region I	02/23/05	02/23/05
Rep. Wm Delahunt Quincy, MA	OCA/Region I	02/23/05	02/23/05
Senator Rick Santorum Philadelphia, PA	OCA/Region I	03/16/05	03/16/05
Senator Arlen Specter Wilkes Barre, PA	OCA/Region I	03/15/05	03/15/05
Rep. Paul Kanjorski Mt. Pocono, PA	OCA/Region I	03/03/05	03/03/05
Senator Lindsey Graham Columbia, SC	OCA/Region II	02/04/05	02/04/05
Rep. John Spratt Rock Hill, SC	OCA/Region II	02/03/05	02/03/05
Senator John Warner Roanoke, VA	OCA/Region II	03/02/05	03/02/05
Senator George Allen Roanoke, VA	OCA/Region II	No response from District office after several phone calls leaving voice mail message	
Rep. Robert Goodlatte Lynchburg, VA	OCA/Region II	03/03/05	03/03/05
Senator Carl Levin Grand Rapids, MI	OCA/Region III	01/20/05	01/20/05
Senator Debbie Stabenow	OCA/Region III	No response from DC office	
Rep. Fred Upton St. Joseph, MI	OCA/Region III	02/03/05	02/03/05

Senator Richard Durbin Springfield, IL	OCA/Region III	02/23/05	02/23/05
Rep. Jerry Costello Belleville, IL	OCA/Region III	02/22/05	02/22/05
Senator Barbara Boxer San Bernardino, CA	OCA/Region IV	02/16/05	02/16/05
Senator Dianne Feinstein Los Angeles, CA	OCA/Region IV	02/16/05	02/16/05
Rep. Lois Capps San Luis Obispo, CA	OCA/Region IV	02/14/05	02/14/05
Senator John McCain	OCA/Region IV	No response from DC office	
Senator Jon Kyl Phoenix, AZ	OCA/Region IV	03/31/05	03/31/05
Rep. Raul Grijalva Tucson, AZ	OCA/Region IV	04/07/05	04/07/05

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OUTREACH WORKING GROUP
INITIATIVES FOR ENHANCING IN-HOUSE
COMMUNICATIONS AND CONNECTIVITY**

The Congressional District Outreach Steering Committee approves the following initiatives for enhancing in-house communications and connectivity among the NRC Program Offices, the Office of State and Tribal Programs (STP), the Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA), the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), and the Regions.

- Identifying and communicating issues of interest among OCA, OPA, STP, and the Regions has been enhanced by the establishment of the Congressional District Outreach Working Group and will expand connectivity through staff attendance and participation in the various established meetings noted in the table below.
- Arranging courtesy visits with the Commission and other senior NRC management during Headquarters/Regional State Liaison Officer (RSLO) and OPA counterpart meetings.
- Ensuring appropriate Program Offices coordinate information that may be of interest to various stakeholders and identify any opportunities for the Commission and senior NRC management to meet, while on official travel, with State, local and Congressional District staff, and the media.
- Periodically reviewing and updating Communications Plans to maintain fluidity and consistent NRC messages.
- Identifying and communicating issues of interest through the NRC Reporter can also expand connectivity among NRC Offices and the Regions.

Outreach efforts and connectivity activities among Offices is currently in process but, perhaps because it is not documented procedurally or well advertised, it may go unnoticed.

EXISTING MEETINGS		
Meeting	Participants	Frequency
EDO Staff Meeting	EDO, DEDOs, Office Directors, Regional Administrators, CFO, OGC, OPA, OCA, DOC	Weekly
OPA Staff Meeting	OPA including Regions, OCA, DOC	Weekly
Chairman Senior Management Meeting	Chairman, Commissioners' Staff, EDO, SECY, OGC, CFO, OPA, OCA, DOC	Daily
Senior Management Retreat	Chairman, EDO, OGC, CFO, OPA, OCA, Office Directors, Regional Administrators	Bi-annual
Agreement States Meeting (teleconference)	Agreement States, STP, OCA, OGC, NMSS, NRR, NSIR, Regions	Monthly
STP Staff Meeting	STP, EDO; RSLOs/RSAOs participate periodically	Weekly
NRR Staff Meeting	NRR, OPA, NSIR, RES	Weekly
NMSS Staff Meeting	NMSS, STP, RES, OPA, OGC	Weekly
RES Staff Meeting	RES, EDO	Weekly
Communications Council Meeting	EDO, DOC, NRR, NMSS, STP, OE, OCA, OPA, ADM, HR, OCIO, RES, Regions	Monthly
NRR/DRA Telecon	NRR, Regions	Monthly
NMSS/DNMS Telecon	NMSS, Regions, NSIR, STP	Bi-monthly
DNMS Counterpart Meeting	NMSS, Regions, NSIR, STP	Annually
RSAO Counterpart Meeting	STP, Regions	Annually
RSLO Counterpart Meeting	STP, Regions, NRR, NMSS, NSIR, OCA	Annually
OE Staff Meeting	OE, NRR, NMSS, Regions	Weekly
OE Counterpart Meeting	OE, NRR, NMSS, Regions, DEDO, STP, SECY	Annual
NSIR Staff Meeting	NSIR, NRR, NMSS, OPA, EDO	Weekly
Rulemaking Coordinating Committee	ADM, NMSS, NRR, OGC, EDO, NSIR, STP, OIS	Monthly