

March 21, 2011

MEMORANDUM TO: Commissioner Svinicki
Commissioner Apostolakis
Commissioner Magwood
Commissioner Ostendorff

FROM: Chairman Jaczko */RA/*

SUBJECT: NRC ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE EVENTS IN JAPAN

The tragic events in Japan have reinforced the importance of this agency's mission and efforts. The NRC's existing licensing and oversight process have provided us with a robust framework for assuring safety at our existing facilities. I also believe that one of our greatest assets as an agency is our ability to analyze and learn from new information. This tragedy requires us to do just that. Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in directing the Executive Director for Operations to establish a senior level agency task force to conduct a methodical and systematic review of our processes and regulations to determine whether the agency should make additional improvements to our regulatory system and make recommendations to the Commission for its policy direction. I believe the review must necessarily unfold with near term and then longer term objectives.

Near Term Review

- This task force should evaluate currently available technical and operational information from the events in Japan to identify near term/immediate operational or regulatory issues affecting domestic operating reactors of all designs in areas such as protection against earthquake, tsunami, flooding, hurricanes; station blackout and a degraded ability to restore power; severe accident mitigation; emergency preparedness; and combustible gas control.
- The task force should develop recommendations, as appropriate, for changes to inspection procedures and licensing review guidance, and recommend whether generic communications, orders, or other regulatory requirements are needed.
- The task force efforts should be informed by some stakeholder input but should be independent of industry efforts.
- The report would be released to the public per normal Commission processes.

To ensure the Commission is both kept informed of these efforts and called upon to resolve any policy recommendations that surface, I believe the task force should, at a minimum, be prepared to brief the Commission on a 30 day quick look report; on the status of the ongoing near term review at approximately a 60 day interval; and then on the 90 day culmination of the near term efforts. Additional specific subject matter briefings and additional voting items that request Commission policy direction may also be added during the Commission's agenda planning meetings and thus, the staff should be prepared in advance to adapt to the Commission's requests following those agenda planning sessions in this dynamic environment.

Longer Term Review

- The task force's longer term review should begin as soon as NRC has sufficient technical information from the events in Japan with the goal of no later than the completion of the 90 day near term report, and the task force should provide updates on the beginning of the longer term review at the 30 and 60 day status updates.
- This effort would include specific information on the sequence of events and the status of equipment during the duration of the event.
- The task force should evaluate all technical and policy issues related to the event to identify additional research, generic issues, changes to the reactor oversight process, rulemakings, and adjustments to the regulatory framework that should be conducted by NRC.
- The task force should evaluate interagency issues such as emergency preparedness.
- Applicability of the lessons learned to non-operating reactor and non-reactor facilities should also be explored.
- During the review, the task force should receive input from and interact with all key stakeholders.
- The task force should provide a report with recommendations, as appropriate, to the Commission within six months from the start of the evaluation for Commission policy direction.
- The report would be released to the public per normal Commission processes.

The proposal described above is intended to provide high-level guidance to a new agency task force. I look forward to reaching Commission consensus on an appropriate approach on this important issue as soon as possible.

SECY, please track.

cc: CFO
EDO
OGC
SECY