October 21, 1998

For: The Commissioners

From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO /s/

Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 16, 1998

*No input this week

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ENCLOSURE A

Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES) Units 1 and 2

On October 13, 1998, an approval was issued for a change to the design basis that will support licensee implementation of hydrogen water chemistry (HWC) in SSES, Units 1 and 2. HWC is intended to mitigate Intergranular Stress Corrosion Cracking (IGSCC) of safety-related stainless steel and inconel reactor vessel materials. IGSCC has already been found on a number of SSES reactor vessel components.

Management Changes

On October 13, 1998, Boston Edison Company announced that Leon J. Olivier, Vice President Nuclear has resigned. He has accepted the Senior Vice

President position for the Millstone Site. Ted Sullivan has been announced as his replacement. Mr. Sullivan is currently the General Manager of Production. He has previously served as Plant Group Manager and Nuclear Training Group Manager. These changes are effective on October 18, 1998. In addition, BECo has extended the bidding period for the sale of Pilgrim Plant until October 18, 1998.

ENCLOSURE B

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Year 2000 Health Care Sector Outreach Event

On October 6, 1998, a staff member from the Division of Industrial and Medical Nuclear Safety (IMNS) represented the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) at an event sponsored by the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion that was held at the George Washington University Hospital. The event, primarily a series of presentations from government and industry leaders on the effect of the Year 2000 problem on the health care industry, followed by a question and answer session with media organizations, was organized by the Council's Health Care Sector Working Group. IMNS is a member of the Working Group. All speakers emphasized the need for hospitals to prepare to meet the challenges posed by the Year 2000 problem. Some speakers mentioned radiology equipment as one potential problem area, but there were no specific references by the speakers or follow-up questions from the press, to NRC-regulated devices or equipment.

IMNS continues to participate on the Year 2000 Health Care Sector Working Group, in meetings with the Food and Drug Administration on regulated devices, and in other Year 2000 outreach activities with the licensed medical community.

Meeting with Portland General Electric

On October 8, 1998, Spent Fuel Project Office management and staff met with Portland General Electric (PGE) to discuss several technical issues concerning PGE's application to operate an independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) at the Trojan Nuclear Plant. The discussions focused on: (1) issues that require resolution before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission could issue PGE a license to operate the ISFSI; and (2) the use of standard technical specifications at the ISFSI. PGE committed to respond to the remaining technical issues and to revise its proposed technical specifications by October 30, 1998. PGE is planning to begin storing fuel at the Trojan ISFSI in April 1999.

Meeting at Nuclear Fuel Services

On October 8, 1998, staff members from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards met with Nuclear Fuel Services (NFS) at the Erwin, Tennessee site to review the development, design and installation of equipment for the KAST fuel manufacturing process, and to discuss matters pertinent to the staff's review of the NFS license renewal application. The NFS license will be renewed by mid-November, and the KAST review is expected to culminate in an amendment to that renewed license soon after. Meetings were also held to discuss issues regarding the KAST process criticality safety analyses, NFS' work on their integrated safety analysis for the KAST process, and other topics including decommissioning plans and other license renewal issues.

Regulatory Program Meeting with Russian Regulators

On October 6-8, 1998, a material protection, control, and accounting (MPC&A) regulatory program meeting was held with representatives of the Russian nuclear regulatory agency GOSATOMNADZOR (GAN) at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Headquarters. Discussions included the status of issues associated with Department of Energy (DOE) and Agency for International Development funding of NRC's MPC&A cooperative program with GAN; coordination of NRC's support program with DOE's regulatory development work in support of GAN; a review of 1998 MPC&A projects, and identification and prioritization of potential 1999 NRC-GAN cooperative MPC&A activities. Two DOE project managers assigned to DOE-GAN projects were also present during the discussions.

ENCLOSURE C

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Meeting with EPRI/NEI and NRC on Industry's Response to Fire PRA Implementation Guide Questions

On October 9, 1998, RES and NRR staff met with NEI and EPRI to discuss industry's responses to the generic fire RAIs on EPRI's 1995 report titled "Fire PRA Implementation Guide." The stated objective of the guide was to provide a detailed method and supporting technical information to allow nuclear utilities to respond to the fire analysis section of the NRC's IPEEE program. Another objective was "to reduce conservatism typically found in fire PRAs." Although the guide had not been reviewed previously by NRC staff for its acceptability for fire IPEEE applications, it was used by more than one-third of the licensees in their IPEEE submittals.

Based on a subsequent staff and contractor review, the staff concluded that although the guide did in some cases provide an improvement over what was in the literature, the application of some areas of the guide could result in overlooking potentially important contributors to fire risk for some plants.

Therefore, the staff issued 15 generic questions to both NEI and the associated licensees. Both the staff and NEI felt that the most effective and efficient way to address these questions was for both parties to agree on a technical approach to resolution, rather than for individual licensees to provide their own, perhaps different, responses.

The purposes of the October 9th meeting were to develop a resolution strategy that satisfies the IPEEE goals and objectives and to define a closure path to resolve each of the generic RAIs. During the meeting EPRI and its contractors presented draft responses to the RAIs. There was general agreement initially on five of EPRI's responses. On other questions the staff raised some concerns that had not been addressed in the draft responses, and there were detailed technical discussions on each of these questions. As a result of these discussions, NEI/EPRI agreed to make additional changes to the guide that would remove the potential for misapplication or misinterpretation of the procedures or data. The effected licensees will then provide a plant-specific response based on the revised guidance. This resolution will enable the staff to complete their plant-specific IPEEE reviews.

OECD/CSNI International Standard Problem 43 Workshop

On October 8 and 9, 1998, the NRC and the University of Maryland (U of MD) hosted the first of two workshops for ISP 43: Rapid Boron Dilution Transient Tests for Code Verification. Attendees included representatives from eight foreign countries, OECD, US industry, as well as the NRC and the U of MD. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss test objectives, describe in detail the U of MD experimental facilities, and agree on the required code predictions. A tour of the facilities was provided and included demonstration experiments conducted in the 2x4 loop and flow visualization facilities providing typical data and information for the participants to review.

The second workshop is scheduled for next year after the experiments have been completed and the participants have performed their analyses of those experiments. All participants have chosen to use computational fluid dynamics (CFD) codes for this exercise.

Rapid boron-dilution transients have been the subject of extensive research during recent years, which comprised both experimental and computational efforts, including the NRC sponsored work at the U of MD. The ISP 43 test series design acknowledges the needs of both integral test experts and computational experts. The premise of these tests is that an interfacing-system leak has resulted in a nearly stagnant slug of deborated water to accumulate in one of the steam generators. The slug is then inadvertently set in motion by pump actuation. As it travels through the system, the deborated slug mixes to some degree with the borated primary coolant present in the system. The potential for a significant reactivity excursion depends on the boron concentration in both space and time as the slug enters the core. The University of Maryland tests will focus on the downcomer region where much of the slug reboration occurs. The test series will be increasingly realistic making a transition from a configuration that is nearly special effect to full integral test.

To gain a better understanding of mixing within the complex reactor geometry, a transparent replica of the inlet pipes and the annular downcomer region has been constructed in order to enable direct visualization and quantitative measurement of the mixing process. A combination of Laser Induced Fluorescence and Laser Doppler Velocimetry will be used to measure the concentration and velocity of flow as the slug is transported to the core. Additional details about the U of MD experimental program and ISP 43 can be found at the following web address: www.glue.umd.edu/~loop .

NDE of VSC-24 Dry Storage Casks at Palisades

Division of Engineering Technology (DET) staff has continued to support NMSS/SFPO on resolution of issues related to non-destructive examination (NDE) of VSC-24 Dry Storage Casks at the Palisades plant. Results from recent ultrasonic test (UT) inspections of VSC-24 casks at Palisades have revealed indications beyond the acceptance criteria proposed by the licensee and accepted by the staff. Although preliminary analyses show that the indications are all apparently lack of fusion defects, lack of penetration defects, or slag inclusions, the fracture mechanics-based acceptance criteria would conservatively treat these defects as crack-like.

To avoid having to unnecessarily repair the welds, the licensee for Palisades is performing additional fracture mechanics analyses on the casks. These analyses were discussed with SFPO and DET staff in an October 13, 1998 conference call with the Palisades licensee. Initially, Palisades used a Linear Elastic Fracture Mechanics model based on a flat plate weld design to evaluate the indications. In consultation with their contractor, a Finite Element Model (FEM) which accounts for the actual physical design characteristics of the cask (cylindrical cask, angle of shield lid to cask wall) has been developed. The FEM allows for a more realistic (less conservative) analysis of the actual weld configuration to be performed. The licensee anticipates that use of the FEM will lower the fracture driving force for flaws in the structural lid weld and justify acceptability of the indications.

The FEM analysis is within the commitments made in the NRC-approved UT guideline document and will be further reviewed by NRC staff (SFPO and RES) prior to a Palisades inspection exit meeting (tentatively planned for lat October). The review is likely to be a secondary inspection with a fracture mechanics expert from DET as a team member.

Coordination and Advisory Board Meetings for Structural Mechanics in Reactor Technology (SMiRT) 15 th Conference (SMiRT-15)

On October 12 and 13, 1998, Division of Engineering Technology staff, attended Advisory Board and Coordination meetings in Seoul, Korea for SMiRT-15 conference. The SMIRT conferences, held every other August since 1971, have been the principal international gathering of the engineering and scientific disciplines involved in the structural, mechanical, and material aspects of reactor design, construction, maintenance, and operation. The conferences are unique in that there are no other meetings that have this exclusive focus on the development and practices of these engineering disciplines in reactor technology. The Divisions of Engineering Technology in RES and Engineering in NRR benefit most from the SMiRT participation. NRC has actively supported the SMiRT conferences since its inception by helping in organization, participation, and providing moderate financial support. One significant value to NRC from participating in the SMiRT conferences is the review of information and ensuing discussions of papers by NRC staff and contractors.

SMiRT sessions are arranged during the planning meeting held in the fall before the conference. The meeting in Seoul was to organize SMiRT-15 which

will be held in Korea in August 16-20, 1999. The conference is organized in 13 divisions covering subjects such as, fracture mechanics, non-destructive examination, concrete material and containment structures, seismic response analysis and design, and structural reliability and probabilistic safety assessment. A Division of Engineering Technology staff member attended the planning meeting as a coordinator of Division K, Seismic Response Analysis and Design, and attended Advisory Board meeting on behalf of the Director, Division of Engineering Technology, RES who is the permanent member of the Board. Other Board members in the attendance included M. Livolant of IPSN, France, Prof. Heki Shibata of Japan, Dr. Jean Rastoin of France, Dr. Sergio Finzi of Italy, Mr. Asa Hadjian of Defense Nuclear Safety Board, Prof. Boley from Columbia University, and Prof. Gupta from the North Carolina State University who is chairman for SMiRT-16 conference to be held in Washington in August 2001. There were more than 40 coordinators present, from many countries, to review and select abstracts, help organize sessions, panel discussions, workshops, and plenary lectures. Some 650 abstracts have been received from more than 30 countries. About 600 to 700 participants are expected to attend the SMiRT-15 conference.

ENCLOSURE G

Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 4-Day Period of October 9, 1998 - October 15, 1998:

IMPAC listing.	(FOIA/PA-99-010)
Point Beach, allegations/investigation of named individuals re 5/13/98 incident, FOIA/PA 98-350.	(FOIA/PA 99-011)
Radio Frequencies, Referral from Commerce.	(FOIA/PA 99-012)

ENCLOSURE I

Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Arrivals		
ORR, Laura	SECRETARY	RII
Retirements		
CALLAN, L. Joseph	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS	EDO

ENCLOSURE M

Office of Public Affairs
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Media Interest

The Hartford Courant is preparing a story on buried radioactive waste at the University of Connecticut.

There was media interest in Region III on the $500,000 fine against D.C. Cook.

Knight-Ridder is planning a series of articles on the Y2K readiness of nuclear power plants.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
98-184	Note to Editors: ACRS meeting October 29-30
98-185	NRC Order to STP Nuclear Operating Co. Confirms Fire Barrier Corrective Actions at South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2
98-186	NRC Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards to Meet in Rockville, Maryland
98-187	Note to Editors: ACRS report
Regions:	

I-98-115	NRC Sends Inspectors to Permagrain to Look Into Contamination Event
II-98-60	NRC Staff to Hold Informal Public Hearing on October 26 on Petition to Revoke Operating License for Browns Ferry Unit 1
II-98-61	NRC Rates Turkey Point Nuclear Plant "Superior" in all Four Areas of Latest Assessment Report
III-98-52	NRC Staff Proposes $500,000 Fine Against D.C. Cook Plant for Multiple Violations of Safety Requirements

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ENCLOSURE N

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Working Group

On October 16, Dr. Karen Henderson attended a meeting of the interagency NPT Working Group, which is chaired by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency's Bureau of Non-Proliferation and Regional Arms Control. The NPT Working Group assists in the development of guidance and policy for the U.S. delegation to the various NPT-related meetings. This meeting was part of an ongoing series leading up to the January 1999 NPT Preparatory Committee (PrepCom III) and ultimately the 2000 Review Conference (RevCon). The Working Group was briefed on results of consultations with various NPT parties and groups (e.g., with individual states, with the NPT Depositaries, with the P-3 and with the P-5 states); discussed key issues for PrepCom III; and reviewed U.S. Government priorities and objectives for the RevCon.

Copies of Import and Export Licenses and Applications Now Appearing on the Web

Copies of all import and export license applications and all licenses issued are now being scanned and are available on the web site at http://www.nrc.gov/IP/exexport.htm. You may also sign up for automatic notification of updates to the information.

ENCLOSURE O

Office of the Secretary
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Documents Released to Public		Date	Subject
Decision Documents			
1.	COMSECY-98-014	6/17/98	Revision to Management Directive (MD) 6.1 - Resolution and Followup of Audit Recommendations
	SRM on COMSECY-98-014	10/14/98	(SAME)
	Chmn. Jackson vote on COMSECY-98-014	9/3/98	(SAME)
	Cmr. Diaz vote on COMSECY-98-014	8/21/98	(SAME)
	Cmr. McGaffigan vote on COMSECY-98-014	8/24/98	(SAME)
2.	SECY-98-201	8/21/98	Deferral of Regulatory Oversight of Certain Portions of the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
	SRM on 98-201	10/15/98	(SAME)
	Comm. Voting Record on 98-201	10/15/98	(SAME)
Information Papers			
1.	SECY-98-223	9/25/98	Litigation Report - 1998 - 4
2.	SECY-98-224	9/28/98	Staff and Industry Activities Pertaining to the Management of Commitments Made by Power Reactor Licensees to the NRC

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to Steve Collins, Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc., dated October 6, 1998 concerns the establishment of a Committee on Unwanted Radioactive Material (incoming letter dated April 14, 1998 also released).

2. Letter to Senator James Inhofe dated October 7, 1998 provides responses to post hearing questions that were submitted by Members of Congress for the hearing record.

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. 10 CFR Parts 50, 52 and 72; Changes, Tests, and Experiments; Proposed Rule.

2. Joint ACRS Subcommittees on Reliability and Probabilistic Risk Assessment and on Regulatory Policies and Practices; revised meeting date.

ENCLOSURE P

Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Materials Program Branch Chief Counterpart Meeting

Region I sponsored a counterpart meeting for materials program Branch Chiefs from each Region and NMSS on October 7-8, 1998, in Hunt Valley, MD. The meeting was held to improve communications among Headquarters and the four Regions, enhance consistency, and maximize effectiveness at a time of significant change in the areas of materials licensing, inspection and enforcement. The wide range of topics included technical issues, policy matters, management items, and rulemakings of interest to the materials program. This was the first such meeting for materials program Branch Chiefs since May 1994.

Allegheny Health, Education and Research Foundation (AHERF)

The Allegheny Health, Education and Research Foundation (AHERF) recently provided an Escrow Agreement as financial assurance for the Allegheny University of the Health Sciences (AUHS) License No. 37-01317-01. AHERF is the controlling entity for AUHS. The Escrow Agreement sets aside $150,000 in an account at National City Bank of Pennsylvania and replaces the Letter of Credit for AUHS which expires on October 18, 1998. A letter was sent to AHERF by Region I on October 9, 1998 informing them that the Escrow Agreement satisfies the requirement for providing financial assurance. Region I is continuing to work with AHERF to replace the Standby Trust Agreement for two other licenses, and on issues regarding change of ownership of additional licenses from AHERF due to the recent sale of eight AUHS hospitals in the Philadelphia area.

ENCLOSURE P

Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending October 16, 1998

Florida Power Corporation - Crystal River

On October 14, 1998, a full scale nuclear emergency exercise was conducted at the Florida Power Corporation's Crystal River facility, and included participation from officials of the State of Florida, as well as Citrus and Levy counties, respectively.

The performance of the State and local government officials was evaluated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Regional Assistance committee (FEMA/RAC).

The staff's evaluation of the licensee's performance, and FEMA/RAC's evaluation, concluded that all exercise objectives were fully satisfied, and that the performance of all participating response organizations was consistent with the applicable Federal regulations and guidance.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Bellefonte Nuclear Plant

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson visited Bellefonte on October 16, 1998, and toured the plant with TVA officials and local congressional representatives and staff members. Representatives from the General Accounting Office are scheduled to visit TVA officials and the Bellefonte plant the week of October 19.