

March 23, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: William D. Travers **/RA/**
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF PROGRESS ON ORPHAN SOURCE ISSUES AND
PILOT PROGRAM (FOLLOW-UP TO SECY-00-0184)

This memorandum provides an update of progress on orphan source issues, previously discussed in SECY-00-0184, "Staff Progress on Orphan Source Issues: Follow-up to SECY-99-038," dated August 24, 2000.

Since August 2000, the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors (CRCPD) E-34 Committee on Unwanted Radioactive Material (the E-34 Committee) has made considerable progress on its orphan source pilot program, and the development of a national orphan source program. The E-34 Committee has: 1) established a contract with the Colorado State Radiation Control Program to execute a pilot program to retrieve and dispose of approximately 30 cesium-137 orphan sources; 2) established a very aggressive schedule in November 2000, for the completion of its program development activities and the pilot; and 3) gained approval from the CRCPD Board of Directors to expand the pilot to include orphan source recoveries in the States of New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The E-34 Committee expects to arrange for retrieval of all sources in Colorado by March 31, 2001, and issue a final report on its development of a national orphan source program by mid-April 2001.

Resolution of potential liability issues has been the biggest challenge in executing the pilot program contracts. The E-34 Committee wants to assure the capability to respond promptly to orphan source incidents. To establish a process that is more streamlined, while minimizing potential contractual and liability issues, the committee is applying lessons learned from the initial pilot in Colorado to its approach to the specific orphan source cases in the other three States. The committee will also consider the lessons learned from the cases in the other three States in its final report on the development of a national orphan source program.

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Starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001, staff budgeted \$450,000 per year to fund an orphan source contract. Based on receipt of the CRCPD's final report in mid April, 2001, staff estimates an orphan source contract could be in place by late FY 2001. The staff has reserved \$100,000 of FY 2001 funds to initiate this contract.

The next report on orphan sources (WITS 199800092) is due to the Commission on September 28, 2001.

cc: SECY
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