

October 11, 2000

SUBJECT: Summary of Telecom with FEMA Related to Emergency Planning for
Decommissioning Nuclear Power Plants

To support the technical evaluation for decommissioning spent fuel pool risk and the related decision-making process for establishing the appropriate level of EP for decommissioning plants, the staff conducted a telecom with representatives of FEMA today to solicit its views on several matters. The following bullets summarize our discussion:

- Given an earthquake severe enough to rupture a spent fuel pool, FEMA is inclined to agree with the staff that preplanned EP would probably not make much difference in the overall effectiveness of the emergency response to such an event. However, FEMA believes that no matter what the event, given a choice of having preplanned EP over no EP, that preplanned EP would be better.
- Given an event that does not impact the infrastructure of the surrounding community, such as the cask drop event, FEMA believes that 10 to 12 hours should be adequate to make necessary notifications, formulate protective action recommendations and initiate and evacuation. FEMA did not attempt to estimate what impact or how much longer it would take to evacuate a community without preplanning versus with preplanning (once an evacuation was underway). However, FEMA was fairly clear that it does not support total elimination of offsite EP even with 10 to 12 hours of time between event initiation and start of a zirconium fire. FEMA believes that some minimal level of offsite EP along with associated training and drills should be maintained as long as the Zirc fire is possible.
- FEMA stated that it is reasonable to assume that a licensee, through the existing Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan with NRC acting as Lead, could obtain the full benefits of our nations resources and assets to respond to and mitigate a spent fuel drain down accident (such as asking the national guard to fly-in water tanker planes) within 36 hours of the event initiation.
- We informed FEMA that the final spent fuel pool risk study was scheduled to be completed by 10/31/00 and that the conclusions in that report may not be the same as those contained in the draft report or the rulemaking plan that FEMA has previously reviewed. We noted that NRC would continue to work closely with FEMA as we crafted EP regulations for decommissioning plants.
- We informed FEMA of the upcoming ACRS meeting on 10/18/00 with the technical staff on decommissioning spent fuel pool risk and invited FEMA to attend.

Overall, the call was productive and informative for both the NRC and FEMA.

Participants: FEMA- Russell Salter, William Wark, Vanessa Quinn, William McNutt, O.C. Payne

NRC - Kathy Halvey Gibson, Falk Kantor, Daniel M. Barss, William Huffman, Diane Jackson.

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Glenn Tracy (part time)

Side note: (not part of the discussions with FEMA) The NRR branch chief responsible for reactor EP program oversight and related regulatory issues, expressed concern about concurring on the technical working group's risk study final report without having been involved in the deliberative process and development of the recommendations related to EP.