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Rules and Directives  
James W. Davis  
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS  
NUCLEAR GENERATION

January 25, 2002

Ms. Annette Vietti-Cook  
Secretary  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

ATTENTION: Rulemakings and Adjudication Staff

SUBJECT: Industry Comments on DG-1085 & NUREG-1713

The Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI)<sup>1</sup> appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on DG-1085, "Standard Format and Content of Decommissioning Cost Estimates for Nuclear Power Reactors" and on NUREG-1713, "Standard Review Plan for Decommissioning Cost Estimates for Nuclear Power Reactors." These documents provide useful guidance to licensees as well as NRC review staff. The comments provided are intended to improve the clarity and consistency of the guidance.

These documents and the associated regulations apply to costs associated with a narrowly defined set of activities included within the NRC definition of decommissioning. However, it confuses the public when activities like building demolition and site restoration are termed "non-decommissioning costs" in these documents. These activities are viewed as decommissioning to the general public and local governments. NEI recommends that the cost for these activities be consistently referred to in these documents as "non-NRC decommissioning costs" or some similar descriptor.

Some licensees may want to keep NRC decommissioning funds and non-NRC decommissioning funds in the same account to reduce the administrative costs for

<sup>1</sup> NEI is the organization responsible for establishing unified nuclear industry policy on matters affecting the nuclear energy industry, including regulatory aspects of generic operational and technical issues. NEI members include all utilities licensed to operate commercial nuclear power plants in the United States, nuclear plant designers, major architect/engineering firms, fuel fabrication facilities, materials licensees, and other organizations and individuals involved in the nuclear energy industry.

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A. Beranek (AFB)

fund management. This should be acceptable if the amount for each fund is clearly documented.

The guidance states that the preliminary cost estimate should be submitted at the same time as the certification of permanent shutdown if a plant shuts down more than five years prior to the expiration of its operating license. This expectation goes beyond the regulatory requirement and could unnecessarily delay the certification of permanent shutdown if a cost estimate has not previously been developed. The preliminary cost estimate requires details like a preliminary decommissioning schedule, information that may not be available to meet the requirement for certification within 30 days of the permanent shutdown decision. A more realistic schedule should be provided to plants that shut down early.

Both documents state that, "...a site-specific estimate may be submitted at the discretion of the licensee when a higher funding level than that calculated in the formula in 10 CFR 50.75(c) is desired." A site-specific estimate represents a detailed analysis which should be acceptable even if it justifies a funding level that is lower or higher than that determined by the simplistic formula.

Section 3.2 of DG-1085 describes items to be included in the site-specific decommissioning cost estimate as part of the description of the overall decommissioning project. The first item listed is a detailed work breakdown that describes all the activities to be performed, including planning and preparation. The description should be revised to state that this information is only requested at a summary level. It would be burdensome to include a detailed breakdown that includes all activities. Such a breakdown would likely change as the project progresses and would be of little value, unless prepared at a summary level.

Section 3.2 of DG-1085 also requires a summary of available characterization data. Included in the listed examples are chemicals. Unless the presence of these chemicals impacts activities covered in the scope of the NRC definition of decommissioning, they would only impact "non-NRC decommissioning costs" and need not be reported.

Section 3.7 of DG-1085 requires radwaste volume by Class be provided assuming no volume reduction. A suggested format is given in Table 8. However Table 8 includes only burial volumes, which typically are post volume reduction. Further, radwaste volumes prior to volume reduction provide limited information relative to cost. Licensees should have the flexibility to document the costs of radwaste management in the logical way they actually manage it.

In section 1.4.2 of NUREG-1713, the reviewer is instructed to evaluate the discussion of spent fuel management and low-level waste disposal costs. Although

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the section points out that the spent fuel discussion is limited to that, which "would affect the radiological decommissioning project," the two issues are sufficiently unrelated that they warrant separate discussion in the guidance.

Both NUREG-1713 and DG-1085 state that the site-specific cost estimate and the updated site-specific cost estimate required in the license termination plan are summaries of the detailed analysis of decommissioning costs. We agree that this summary level of detail is appropriate and provides adequate information for NRC review. This guidance will help ensure uniform reporting requirements in the future.

Page 33 of NUREG-1713 states that if the decommissioning project includes SAFSTOR periods (longer than about 5 years), shipment and processing or storage of greater-than-Class-C waste (GTCC) should be included. If GTCC waste is stored at an on-site independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI), what portion of the design, construction, operation, and decommissioning costs for the ISFSI are now within the scope of NRC decommissioning costs? Why wouldn't these costs be reported regardless of the choice of SAFSTOR?

In conclusion, we believe that the draft documents provide useful guidance and that the comments provided on behalf of the nuclear energy industry will add to the clarity and consistency of that guidance. If you have questions, please contact Paul H. Genoa at (202) 739-8034.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James W. Davis", with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

James W. Davis

PHG/