



UNITED STATES  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WASTE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20555 - 0001

**REVISED**

ACNWS-0140

November 3, 2003

The Honorable Nils J. Diaz  
Chairman  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, DC 20555-0001

SUBJECT: SUMMARY REPORT—145<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ON NUCLEAR WASTE, SEPTEMBER 23–24, 2003, AND OTHER RELATED  
COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Dear Chairman Diaz:

The Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste (ACNW or the Committee) held its 145<sup>th</sup> meeting on September 23–24, 2003, at Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. This meeting was previously scheduled to be held on September 16–18, 2003, but because of inclement weather, it was rescheduled. During this meeting, the Committee discussed the following matters.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE**

### **1. Commission Presentation**

The Committee discussed its presentation for the October 23, 2003, public meeting with the NRC Commissioners. Topics proposed for discussion included the following:

#### Chairman's Report

- ACNW Priorities and Future Review Plans
- Working Groups (Past and Future)
- Public Outreach Initiatives
- ACNW Role in the Yucca Mountain License Application

#### Presentations

- Status and Pathway to Closure on Key Technical Issues
- High-Level Waste Risk Insights
- TSPA/TPA Working Group
- Performance Confirmation Working Group

### **Committee Action**

None. Members approved draft viewgraphs, subject to editing.

## **2. Committee Retreat**

On September 23, 2003, the ACNW conducted its 2003 retreat. The purpose of the retreat was to identify the technical topics (including focused working groups) that the Committee intended to examine during the next calendar year. The topics selected were intended to be consistent with the priorities defined in the ACNW 2003–2004 Action Plan as well as earlier Committee discussions with the Commission and Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) management. The Committee's retreat was abridged owing to the repercussions of the recent tropical storm *Isabel* on the Washington metropolitan area.

Two outside speakers had agreed to speak to the members as part of the retreat deliberations. Dr. Kevin Crowley, Staff Director of the National Academies Board on Radioactive Waste Management, presented his personal views on emerging waste management issues that may be of potential interest to the ACNW. Ms. Margaret Federline, NMSS Deputy Director, presented the NRC waste management perspective on those staff products and activities (planned and underway) that might benefit from independent review by the Committee. During the Committee deliberations that followed, the Members identified a partial list of technical topics they intended to examine during the next calendar year. It was agreed that the deliberations on this subject would continue in subsequent Committee meetings.

### **Committee Action**

None. These briefings and discussions were intended for information only.

## **3. Planning for 147<sup>th</sup> ACNW Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada**

As part of its public outreach efforts, the ACNW schedules one meeting annually in southern Nevada. The Committee plans to visit the Yucca Mountain site while in Nevada for its 147<sup>th</sup> ACNW meeting in November 2003.

In addition to an underground tour of the proposed repository, the Committee will tour the nearby community of Amargosa Valley, observing, first hand, the characteristics and lifestyles of this rural area near the potential geologic repository. The tour will also contribute to the Members' knowledge base for the forthcoming ACNW working group meeting on biosphere dose calculations. Stakeholder representatives have been invited to accompany the Committee on the tour.

Potential technical topics for briefings by DOE representatives over the remaining 2 days of the scheduled visit were also discussed.

**4. Reconciliation of ACNW Comments and Recommendations**

During its Planning and Procedures meeting on September 23, 2003, the Committee considered the following report from the NRC's Executive Director for Operations (EDO):

EDO response dated September 12, 2003, to ACNW letter dated August 13, 2003, concerning High-Level Waste; Risk Significance Ranking of Agreements and the Use of Risk Information to Resolve Issues

The Committee decided that it was satisfied with the EDO's response.

**5. Follow-Up Items**

As an outcome from the 144<sup>th</sup> ACNW meeting, July 29–31, 2003, the Committee issued a report to Nils J. Diaz, Chairman, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), from B. John Garrick, Chairman, ACNW regarding the "Working Group Session on Performance Confirmation for Yucca Mountain," dated October 1, 2003.

**6. Proposed Agenda for the 146<sup>th</sup> ACNW MEETING**

The Committee agreed to consider the following topics at its 146<sup>th</sup> meeting on October 21–23, 2003:

- Finalize the Agenda and Speakers for the February 2004 Biosphere Scenarios and Dose Calculation Working Group
- ACNW November Site Visit to the Proposed Yucca Mountain Repository
- Continue Its Committee Retreat Discussions
- Yucca Mountain Pre-Closure Safety and Drift Degradation Issues
- Updated Staff Performance Assessment Code TPA 5.0 and Peer Review Comments
- Waste-Management-Related Safety Research Report
- Preparation for Meeting With the NRC Commissioners
- Receive an Update on Waste Management Topics from the Director, Division of Waste Management, NMSS

- Preparation of ACNW Reports
  - Yucca Mountain Pre-Closure Safety and Drift Degradation Issues (Tentative)
  - Updated Staff Performance Code TPA 5.0 (Tentative)

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Michael T. Ryan  
Acting Chairman