

January 15, 2004

Dr. Mario V. Bonaca, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

SUBJECT: DRAFT 10 CFR PART 52 CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION
PROGRAM FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

Dear Dr. Bonaca:

This is in response to your letter dated December 12, 2003, presenting the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) with regard to draft 10 CFR Part 52, "Construction Inspection Program Framework Document." The ACRS concluded that the framework document provides a good basis for the development of inspection guidance for the certification and licensing of new plants. The ACRS commended the staff for developing sign-as-you-go (SAYGO) and Construction Inspection Program Information Management System (CIPIMS) concepts. The Committee agreed with the staff's proposed use of statistical sampling but recommended that the number of inspections, tests, analyses, and acceptance criteria (ITAACs) subject to minimal inspection be small. Additionally, the ACRS recommended that the staff require licensees to identify and correct weaknesses in the corrective action program (CAP) and for licensees to examine the root causes of CAP weakness for generic implications to other 10 CFR Part 52 activities.

I appreciate the Committee's support for the proposed framework document and associated SAYGO, CIPIMS, and statistical sampling concepts. The staff plans to consider ACRS conclusions and recommendations in refining the inspection sampling process discussed in Section III.D.3.a, "Inspection Sampling Techniques and Use of Risk Insights," and Appendix C, "Inspection Sampling," of the construction inspection program framework document. The staff plans to finalize the framework document in the spring of 2004, but the discussion of the NRC's inspection sampling process will probably continue throughout 2004. The staff plans to discuss resolution of the sampling process with the ACRS before it is finalized. We agree with the Committee's views concerning the CAP and have modified the framework document accordingly.

Sincerely,

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director
for Operations

cc: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
SECY

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