

October 3, 2005

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Governor of Idaho  
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Kempthorne:

In 1976, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) adopted a recommendation from several State organizations, including the National Governors' Association, that we request each State to appoint a single person to act as liaison to the NRC for the purpose of improving Federal/State cooperation. The NRC looks to the Governor-appointed State Liaison Officers to provide a communication channel between the States and the NRC, to be the key person in the State to keep the Governor completely informed on nuclear regulatory and related public health and safety matters, and to provide the NRC with answers to questions posed to the States on particular issues.

As a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the NRC has increased its communications with the Governor-appointed State Liaison Officers. State Liaison Officers' responsibilities have changed and are continuing to evolve. Moreover, there is an increased need to ensure that other State officials with a "need-to-know" have access to information that may be classified or sensitive unclassified, which includes Safeguards Information (SGI). SGI is a special category of sensitive unclassified information authorized by Section 147 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, to be protected from inadvertent release and unauthorized disclosure. SGI is handled and protected more like classified National Security Information than like other sensitive unclassified information. The State Liaison Officer serves as the primary recipient for sensitive unclassified information, including SGI, from NRC.

It is my understanding that the most recent State Liaison Officer, Douglas Walker, who was a Senior Health Physicist in the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) Oversight and Radiation Control Program, has retired. The NRC continues to work with the interim State Liaison Officer, Craig Halverson, INEEL Oversight Program Manager, and, until you choose a new State Liaison Officer, we will keep you informed of our programs and activities through Mr. Halverson. At the same time, we will continue to work with various individuals in State agencies with whom we have established relationships on specific issues.

The Commission looks forward to the continued participation by the State of Idaho in the NRC's State Liaison Officer program. If you or your staff have any questions or wish to obtain additional information, please contact Paul H. Lohaus, Director of NRC's Office of State and Tribal Programs in Headquarters at 301-415-3340 or William Maier, our Region IV State Liaison Officer, at 817-860-8267.

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I am looking forward to continuing an excellent working relationship with the State of Idaho.

Sincerely,

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Nils J. Diaz

cc: Craig Halverson