

October 5, 2005

ORGANIZATION: Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI)

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF LICENSE RENEWAL TELEPHONE CONFERENCE
BETWEEN THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC)
STAFF AND NEI LICENSE RENEWAL TASK FORCE

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff and the NEI License Renewal Task Force held a public telephone conference on August 31, 2005, to discuss license renewal topics and license renewal process improvements. Interested members of the public participated in the conference call. The meeting agenda is contained in Enclosure 1. Participants in the conference call are listed in Enclosure 2. A summary of the discussions follows:

Status of the NRC revision of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) NUREG-1437

The NRC staff completed the scoping meetings for the update of the GEIS in 2003. Work on a GEIS update was then stopped due to funding priorities. Resources have been budgeted to begin work again on the GEIS update in Fiscal Year 2006. The staff plans to issue a *Federal Register* notice to request public input on any new issues that should be addressed in the update. The update is expected to be completed in 2008.

Guidance document update status

As requested by NEI, the proposed revisions to the license renewal guidance documents were made publicly available when they were sent to the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) for review. Subsequent to this telephone conference, the ACRS reviewed the documents at its September 9, 2005, meeting and the staff met with the Committee to Review Generic Requirements on September 13, 2005. The staff is on schedule to issue the documents by September 30, 2005. NUREG-1833, which documents the bases for the changes since July 2001, will be issued approximately one month after the guidance documents.

New issues under development within the NRC that may affect license renewal

The NRC staff indicated that there are no new license renewal issues under consideration at this time for discussion with the industry. As stressed in previous meetings, the staff will communicate early on with the industry and the public if a topic is identified that may warrant issuance of Interim Staff Guidance.

Follow-up on action items from July 21, 2005, meeting

A. Severe Accident Mitigation Alternatives (SAMA) Analysis Guidance Document (NEI 05-01)

In a letter dated, July 12, 2005, the NRC staff provided NEI with comments on its proposed guidance document, NEI 05-01. NEI indicated that it was evaluating the comments and may need to discuss some of the comments with the staff in October.

B. Industry response to the staff's assessment of the pilot audit process

NEI is preparing comments on the staff's assessment of the pilot audit review process presented at the July 21st meeting, and the industry's own assessment of the process. Cost comparisons for the new audit process vs. the previous review process were not available when the assessment was performed but there is an expectation that there will be a reduction in costs with the new process. The industry also stressed the need to control contractor costs with the heavy reliance on contractors for license renewal reviews.

C. Scoping and screening guidance document

At the July 21st meeting, the staff had asked whether the license renewal process would benefit from the development of a scoping and screening guidance document. NEI indicated that it had no position on development of the document, but did indicate that it believed development of the document would be difficult due to the many plant-specific design differences in U.S. plants.

D. Consistency of the audit process

In response to concerns raised regarding consistency in audits, the NRC staff is taking action to ensure that the audits are performed consistently. The goal is to send the applicant audit team questions one week before the audit team comes onsite and that written responses are not expected when the team arrives.

NEI had requested that the staff provide a draft of the audit report to the applicant for review prior to the staff issuing the report. The staff is still determining whether there is sufficient time in the schedule to accommodate the request, considering that the staff is also currently assessing whether it can reduce the audit schedule further. The staff will discuss the audit schedule and NEI's request at a future meeting.

E. Interim Staff Guidance (ISG) process

NEI had requested that the staff considering using the generic communication process in place of the ISG process. NEI has indicated in the past that the industry was not always aware of an issue until the staff issued a proposed ISG for comment, which the industry believes limits its input. The concern over communication may be eliminated with the new process of scheduling quarterly meetings and monthly telephone calls for the months without a meeting. The staff reassured the industry that issues being considered for an ISG

would be discussed early on with NEI and any interested stakeholders, before formal development of an ISG. It was agreed to continue the ISG process with the improved communications and discuss use of the ISG process in the future if needed.

Inaccessible or underground cable failure generic letter

The staff is developing a generic letter concerning inaccessible or underground cable failures. This generic letter is an information gathering letter and does not affect the scope of the license renewal review. If action by licensees is determined to be required as a result of the generic letter, the action will be taken under the current operating license and whatever is required will carry forward into the period of extended operation for a plant with a renewed license.

Environmentally assisted fatigue

The NRC's position on addressing environmentally assisted fatigue for license renewal has not changed. The locations identified for assessment in the guidance documents are the minimum number of locations. An applicant is free to propose alternative locations if justified.

Review of applications for sensitive, unclassified information

A recent license renewal application included an existing plant drawing that contained information potentially useful to a terrorist. Applicants were reminded to review the documents used in license renewal applications for sensitive information.

Future activities

A telephone conference was subsequently held on September 29, 2005. A meeting will be scheduled in October 2005.

/RA/

Stephen T. Hoffman, Senior Project Manager
License Renewal Section B
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Project No.: 690

Enclosures: As stated

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**TOPICS OF DISCUSSION AT THE TELEPHONE CONFERENCE
BETWEEN THE U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) STAFF
AND THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE (NEI)**

AUGUST 31, 2005

- Status of the NRC revision of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (NUREG-1437)
- Guidance document update status
- New issues under development within the NRC that may affect license renewal
- Follow-up on action items from July 21st meeting
- Inaccessible or underground cable failure generic letter
- Environmentally assisted fatigue
- Review of applications for sensitive, unclassified information

**TELEPHONE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT LIST
LICENSE RENEWAL MEETING BETWEEN THE
U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) STAFF
AND THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE (NEI)**

August 31, 2005

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Enclosure 2

**TELEPHONE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT LIST
LICENSE RENEWAL MEETING BETWEEN THE
U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) STAFF
AND THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE (NEI)
(Continued)**

August 31, 2005

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