

March 2, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
Commissioner Lyons

FROM: Gregory B. Jaczko /RA/

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR THE REVIEW OF NEW POWER
REACTOR COMBINED OPERATING LICENSES

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) faces a formidable challenge choosing the most effective and efficient process possible for reviewing a large number of combined operating licenses (COL) in the next few years. This decision must be based on a thoughtful analysis of the range of options available to the agency under its current regulations. These options include, but are not necessarily limited to, such previously discussed ideas as developing criteria to prioritize the review of COLs or using a design-centered approach in which one technical review would be performed for each reactor design and this review would be used to support the certification of other license applications.

Which option the Commission chooses will have broad implications on how the agency will function as it reviews new license applications for the first time in decades. This decision will not only affect the fee billing system, resource and staffing requirements, and raise issues regarding the fair treatment of multiple applicants, it could also have an impact on the adjudicatory process. It is important to vet these policy approaches so that any potential problems are identified early to ensure an efficient review of potential license applications.

Therefore, the staff should prepare a notation vote paper addressing these issues. Once the pros and cons of the various options have been presented to the Commission, the Commission should set the policy direction and empower the staff to implement the new effort.

SECY, please track.

cc: OGC
EDO