

July 27, 2006

Dr. Philippe Hessel, Head
Reliability and PRA Section
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
280 Slater Street
P.O. Box 1046, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5S9
CANADA

Dear Dr. Hessel:

This letter is to inform you that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (U.S. NRC) has decided to discontinue, as of September 30, 2006, the activities associated with the International Cooperative Probabilistic Risk Assessment (COOPRA) Research Program. This includes all activities associated with the COOPRA Steering Committee, Working Groups, and Web site. Nonetheless, the existing Implementing Agreement between the U.S. NRC and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) regarding collaboration in the area of probabilistic risk assessment (PRA) research remains in effect and unchanged.

Staff representatives of the U.S. NRC discussed the future of the COOPRA Research Program with the COOPRA partners at the last Steering Committee meeting on October 27–28, 2005. Our principal concern with the program was that differences between activities carried out by COOPRA and the Working Group on Risk Assessment (WGRisk) of the Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (CSNI) have narrowed, resulting in overlapping responsibilities and duplication of effort. In recent years, the benefits of the COOPRA Research Program have diminished as a result of declining COOPRA membership and limited resources available from partner organizations to support the program's activities. Consequently, the U.S. NRC evaluated options for the future of COOPRA, including discontinuing the program.

COOPRA has the following three Working Groups:

- Fire-Induced Damage to Electrical Cables and Circuits (FIDECC)
- Risk-Informed Decision-Making (RIDeM)
- Low-Power and Shutdown (LPSD)

The FIDECC Working Group has not been active lately and currently has no chairperson. The RIDeM Working Group holds annual meetings, at which participants exchange information on research results. The LPSD Working Group has three ongoing activities under COOPRA, and the U.S. NRC has been interacting with WGRisk to have those activities transferred to that organization.

Following the last Steering Committee meeting, the U.S. NRC requested the partners' input and recommendations on the future of COOPRA. After assessing the input, we have decided to discontinue the COOPRA program. Nonetheless, I want to emphasize that the U.S. NRC will maintain our ongoing bilateral agreement for the exchange of PRA-related information with the CNSC. Any future cooperative work in the PRA area will be accomplished through that bilateral agreement and through the WGRisk organization.

Over the years, the COOPRA Research Program has achieved its purpose and established a very effective organization serving participants in PRA international cooperation. I would like to thank the CNSC for the participation and contributions it has provided to COOPRA. It has been a pleasure working with you and your organization, and I look forward to continued cooperation through our existing bilateral agreement and through the WGRisk organization.

If you have any questions or comments on this matter, please contact Dr. Asimios Malliakos of my staff at (301) 415-6458 or via email to ACM1@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/ Brian W. Sheron

Brian W. Sheron, Director
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

P. Hessel

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Brian W. Sheron, Director
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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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